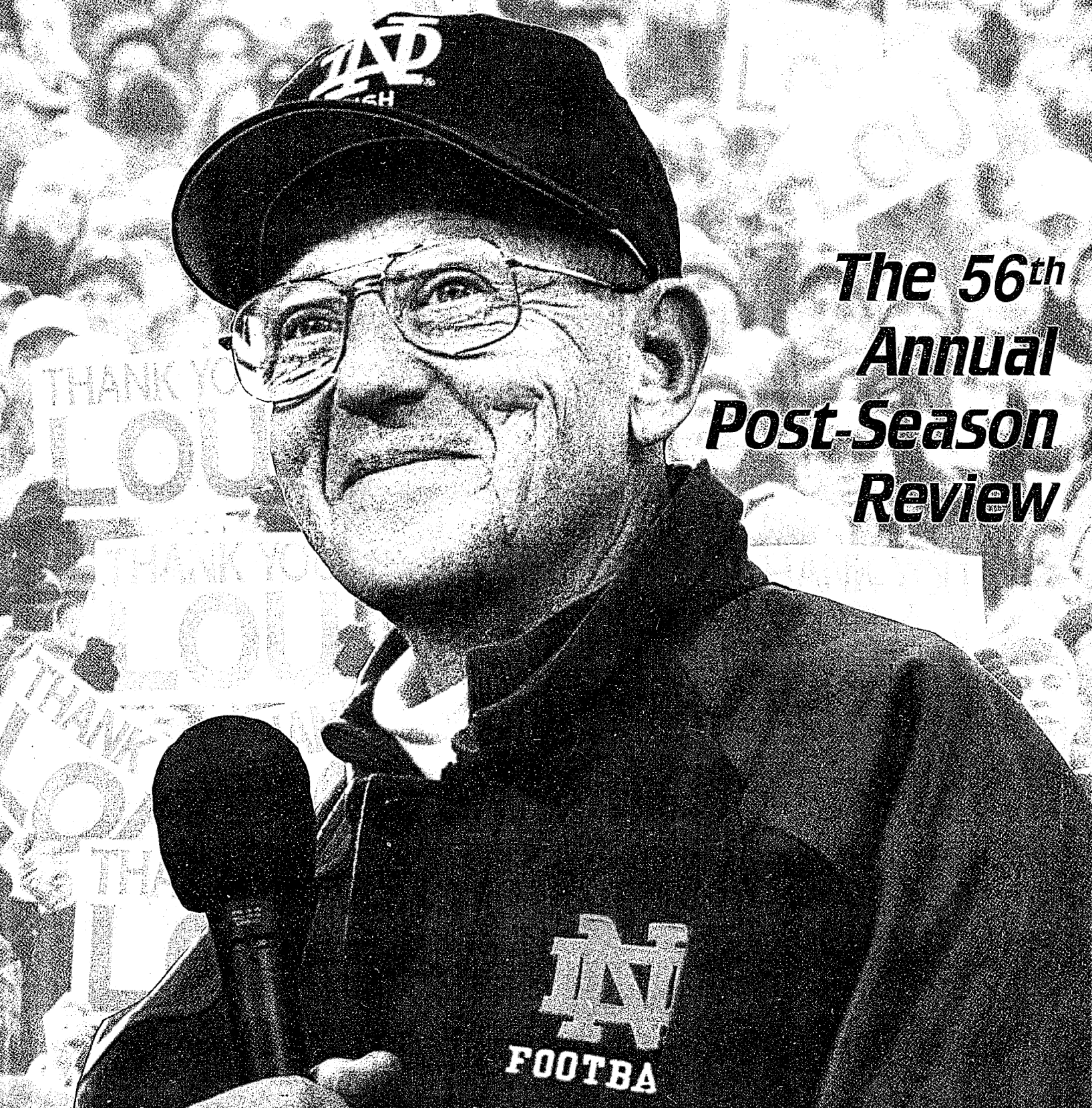


1996 FOOTBALL REVIEW

SCHOLASTIC MAGAZINE

***The 56th
Annual
Post-Season
Review***



OF COURSE WE WERE THERE.

DIDN'T YOU HEAR US?

wvfi
SPORTS
am 640



Lasting Memories

It wasn't supposed to end this way. It should have been different. It should have been better. Lou Holtz — both the man and the legacy — deserved better.

Where are the classic Hollywood endings when you want them the most? Why couldn't we see Holtz, drenched from icy Gatorade, carried off the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum turf on the shoulders of his players? Why weren't we entitled to a battle of wits between two giants of the sport — Holtz and Paterno — in the Fiesta Bowl on New Year's Day?

Why does the lingering image of the Notre Dame coaching pantheon's newest member have to be one of a man sitting at the USC press conference looking utterly defeated and sounding even worse: "I feel like somebody reached into my stomach and pulled out my guts. I've never felt this low."

It doesn't. For every Holtz quote that makes you want to cry, there are 10 that leave you smiling or laughing out loud. Don't remember the beaten-down Holtz after the USC game. Remember the Holtz who spoke from the heart following the romp of Rutgers, the one beaming with so much pride he looked ready to burst. Remember the Holtz who made your emotions well up at every pep rally, the man who got you so juiced you thought you could take on the next day's opponent yourself. Above all, remember the Holtz who gave every ounce of his being to Notre Dame for 11 years. It shouldn't be hard.

Take the same approach with the departing players. Clearly they didn't accomplish all they hoped for at Notre Dame, all that they expected after the dreamlike 1993 season. But each player had his proverbial 15 minutes of fame. There's Robert Farmer, who battled injuries and frustration for his first three years to emerge as a senior with 660 yards (an eye-catching 8.5 yards per carry) and eight touchdowns, including the game-breaking score against Boston College. There's Lyron Cobbins, who couldn't match his impressive 1995 numbers but made the critical interception against Texas to spur the Irish comeback. There's Kevin Carretta, pegged as a career walk-on, who fought and battled until he earned a scholarship and this year became the team's special teams ace.

In the end, the 1996 season — the past three years, for that matter — will not go down in Irish lore. But certain moments inevitably will. Jim Sanson's kick to beat the Longhorns will. The three second-quarter punt returns against Pittsburgh will. And Lou Holtz's heartfelt words after the Rutgers game will. Remember those moments.

Thanks

Special thanks to our staff photographers, Stan Evans and Bret Hogan; Brent Tadsen, who photographed the Texas game, and Mike Bennett, who took the Navy and USC photos; John Heisler, Eric Wachter and the Sports Information Department; Dennis Moore for his thoughts; and Brian Christ and the layout staff. This issue wouldn't have been possible without you.

Jeremy Dixon
Brian Hiro
Sports Editors

Nine Years Ago: National Champs

In 1988, the Notre Dame football team won the national championship. Lou Holtz, in his third year as head coach, related his feelings in the Final Word of that season's Football Review:

It was a fulfilling moment, but you can't dwell on it or become complacent with it. You have to move on. As I tell our players, "Don't tell me what you did yesterday; what have you done today?"

We hope Coach Holtz will continue his success and always focus on today.

—BSB

Cover photos by Stan Evans

Inside back photos, from left to right: file photo, Mike Bennett, file photo, file photo, Mike Bennett, file photo, Stan Evans, file photo, file photo, Bret Hogan, Mike Bennett, file photo

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*Disce Quasi Semper Victurus
Vive Quasi Cras Moriturus*

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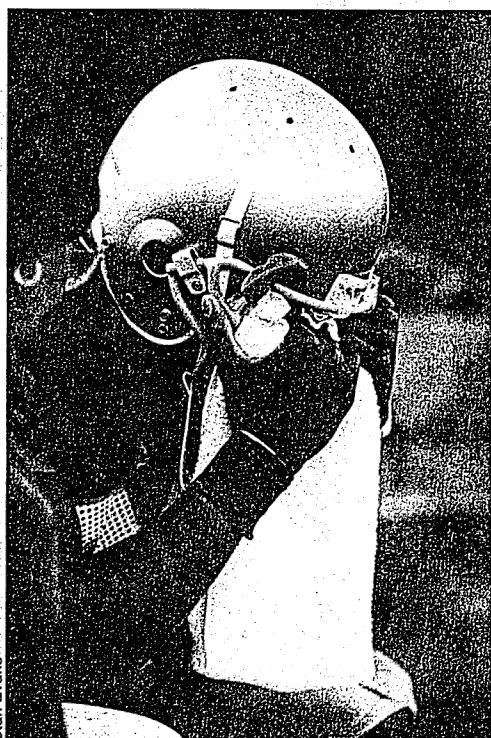
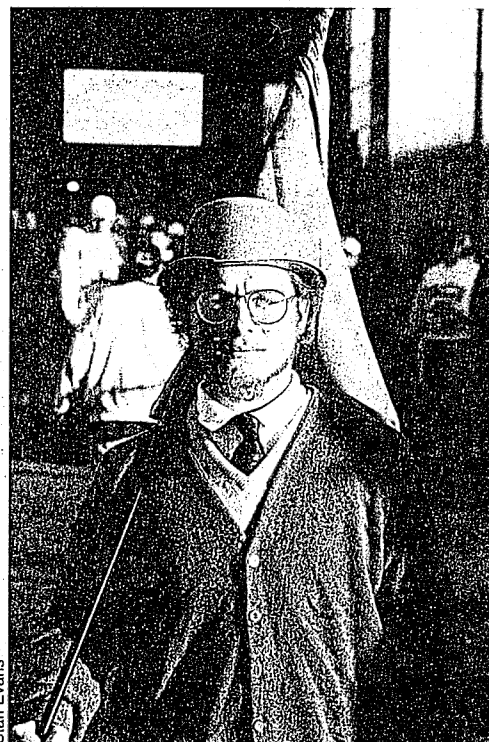
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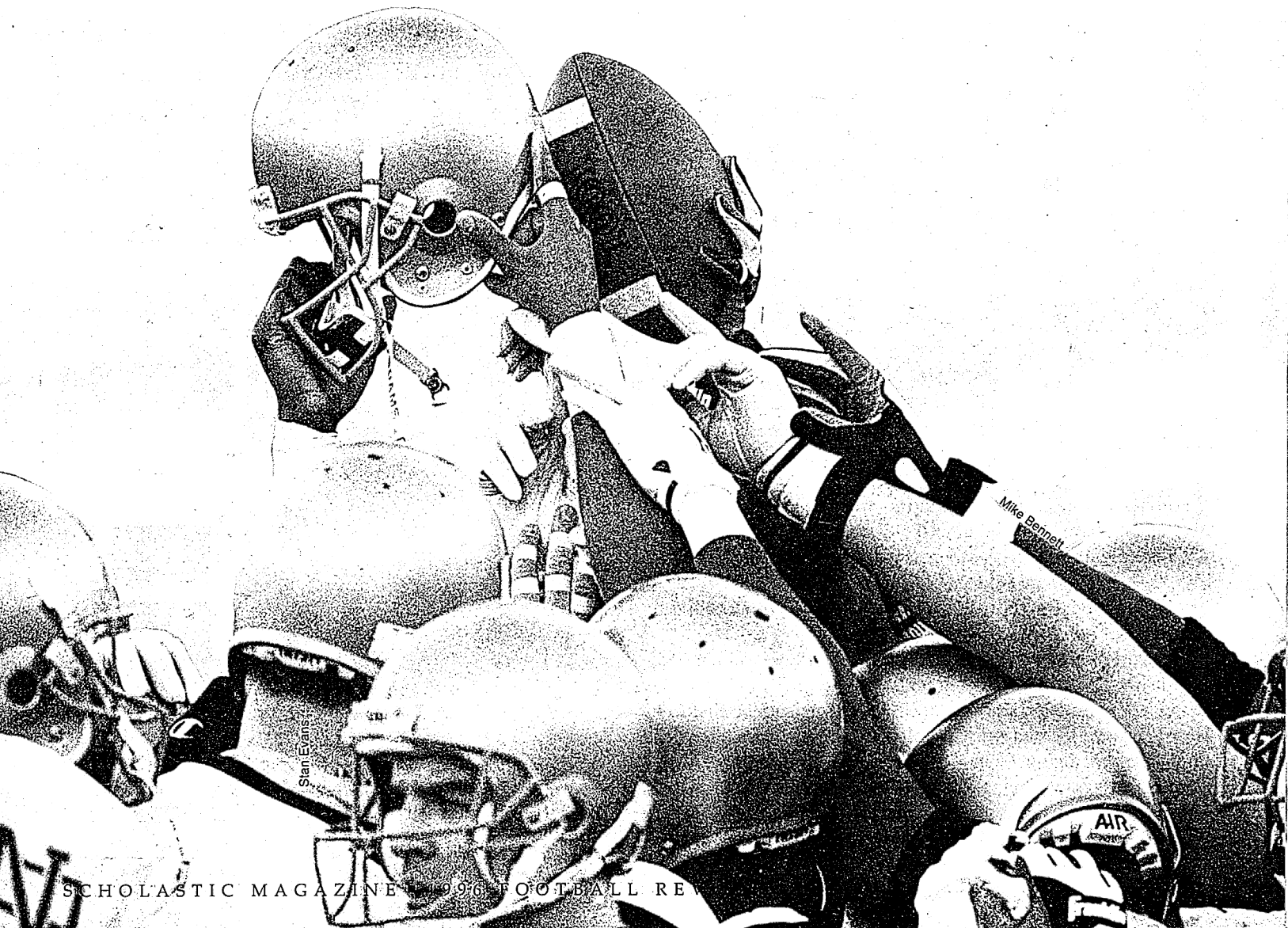
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TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

Vanderbilt

BY
JEREMY
DIXON

Y

ogi Berra once said, "It's like déjà vu all over again." Notre Dame football fans had that same feeling on September 5 in downtown Nashville. After last year's disastrous opening against Northwestern, the Irish were looking to make quick work of Vanderbilt and finally put last year behind them. But victory wishes and national championship dreams nearly turned into nightmares as the Irish escaped with only a 14-7 victory.

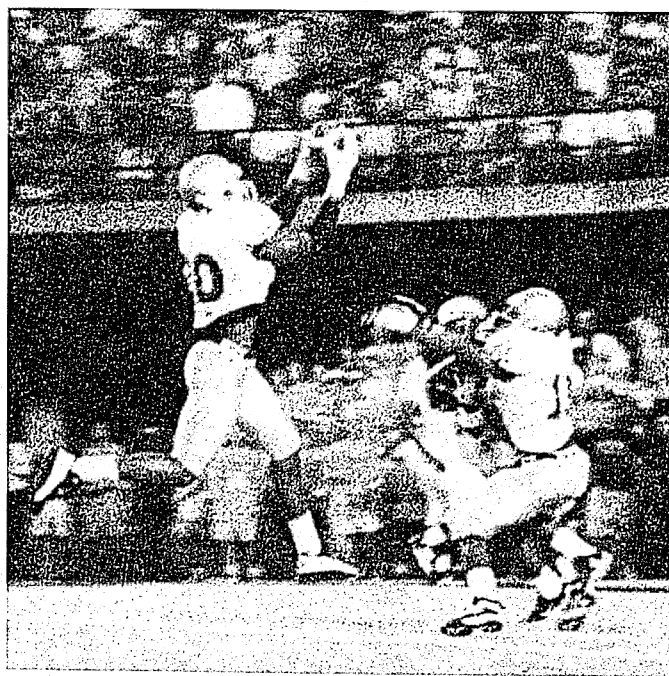
Disaster loomed as close as the rains from Hurricane Fran that threatened the Nashville skies all day and night. Despite complete domination on the defensive side of the ball and more than 400 yards of total offense, the Irish simply could not put Vanderbilt away.

From the opening possession, the offense showed an inability to hold on to the football. Tailback Robert Farmer made the mistake of fumbling on Notre Dame's fourth play from scrimmage and landed in Lou Holtz's doghouse, not seeing the field again until the second quarter.

Fortunately, the Commodores did not want the ball either. Taking over at the Notre Dame 43 after the fumble, quarterback Damian Allen tried to test the Irish secondary deep, only to throw the ball into the hands of safety Jarvis Edison, who returned it to the 33 before fumbling. But this one was picked up by Lyrion Cobbins to retain possession for the Irish.

After driving to the Vandy 20, the Irish offense stalled. Ron Powlus was ineffective early, completing just three of eight in the first quarter and often seeming to pass to the fans in the first row. He missed a wide-open Pete Chryplewicz for a sure touchdown on third down, bringing Scott Cengia on for a 37-yard field goal attempt that went wide right. Cengia found a spot on the bench next to Farmer, and he didn't see the field again that day.

The defense kept the Irish in the game, allowing Vandy only two



Bret Hogan

A Commodore gift. Safety Jarvis Edison retreats to intercept a Damian Allen pass in the first quarter. It was Edison's only pick of the season.

first downs in the first quarter and forcing two turnovers, the second one as time ran out in the first quarter. Kinnon Tatum forced running back Jason Dunnivant to fumble, giving the Irish the ball at the Vanderbilt 43.

The Irish offense again failed to capitalize on the Vanderbilt mistake. They moved to the 32 before a questionable intentional grounding penalty on Powlus pushed the Irish back to midfield, where the drive sputtered.

The rest of the second quarter was a showcase of either powerful defense or inept offense as both teams swapped possessions like kids trade candy the day after Halloween. The Irish offense could find no rhythm. Midway through the second quarter, Powlus completed a 22-yard pass to Malcolm Johnson to start an Irish drive. Two plays later, it was Mark Edwards who coughed up the ball on Notre Dame's 36-yard line, giving the Commodores a prime opportunity to score.

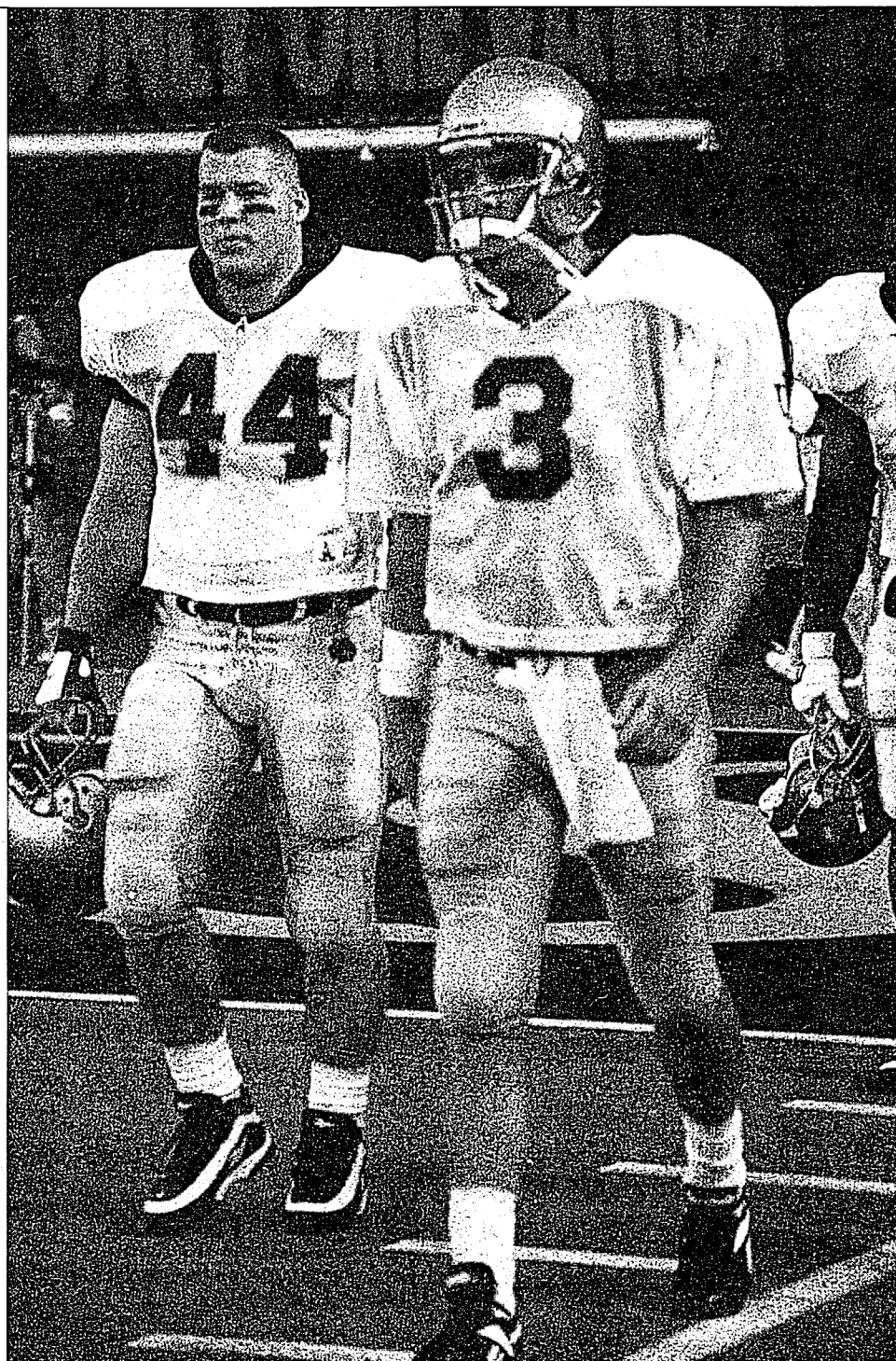
Once again, the defense saved the day for the Irish as Melvin Dansby and Kory Minor sacked Allen on first down. The play was followed by a 1-yard pass and a short run that brought punter Bill Marinangel onto the field again. A pooch punt forced Notre Dame to start at its own 3-yard line with just over four minutes left in the half.

Powlus orchestrated a strong drive for the Irish, utilizing the screen pass to perfection. The key play was a screen to Edwards, who rambled 23 yards to move Notre Dame into field-goal range at the Vanderbilt 23. But the Vandy defense made a stand, forcing Powlus into two bad passes and a short completion.

To the surprise of Irish fans, it was not Cengia who trotted out to try the field goal, but freshman Jim Sanson. Irish fans found an answer to their prayers in the form of a kicker. Not only did Sanson nail the field goal, but he also booted the ensuing kickoff six yards deep in the end zone, a feat the Irish had not accomplished in recent memory.

Receiving the second-half kickoff, Notre Dame looked to capitalize on any momentum it may have gained before the break. The Commodores kicked the ball out of bounds, giving the Irish good field position at their own 35. Holtz came out looking to establish the running game and his troops responded. Edwards, Farmer and Powlus moved the ball upfield behind the offensive line, averaging around five yards a run.

Once again, however, the backs could not



The captains. Marc Edwards and Ron Powlus walk onto the field to begin their senior seasons.

hold on to the ball. Edwards lost the ball again, but it took an Irish bounce off the artificial turf into the hands of Powlus, who picked up the first down. Not to be outdone, Farmer fumbled on the next play. Thanks to another lucky bounce, he recovered it to retain possession. But now the offense was out of sync and had to settle for another Sanson field goal, this one from 32 yards.

"I think Jim Sanson did an excellent job," Holtz said. "He kicked much better in the game than he did in practice."

After the Commodores went three and out, the offense took the field again and began its second drive of the half. After not throwing a pass on the previous drive, Powlus began with a 10-yard toss to Edwards. Consistently moving the ball upfield with an impressive mix of pass and run, the Irish finally looked to be on their way to their first touchdown of the year.

Not so fast, however, as Farmer fumbled the ball for the third time on the Vanderbilt 33-yard line to kill the drive. The quarter

Game at a Glance

Rushing Yards

218 ND

2 Vanderbilt

Passing Yards

216 ND

124 Vanderbilt

Total Yardage

434 ND

126 Vanderbilt

First Downs

25 ND

5 Vanderbilt

Time of Possession

38:47 ND

21:13 Vanderbilt

Penalties (Yards)

73 ND

41 Vanderbilt

SCORING

Notre Dame	0	3	3	8	14
Vanderbilt	0	0	0	7	7

1st Quarter

None

2nd Quarter

ND: Sanson 33 FG at :05

3rd Quarter

ND: Sanson 32 FG at 8:21

4th Quarter

VU: Yoder 50 pass from Allen at 11:16 (Speakman PAT)

ND: Edwards 3 rush at 4:59 (Edwards run)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 6th

ended with both teams trading possessions, and it looked more like a game of hot potato than football.

After another Vanderbilt punt, Notre Dame took the field at its own 1-yard line. After two Powlus passes and a Denson run, it seemed appropriate to give the ball to the usually sure-handed Edwards. But for an unprecedented third time in a game, he fumbled, creating a golden opportunity for Vanderbilt to take the lead.

"I'm embarrassed over how I played," Edwards said. "There's no excuse for turning the ball over. I tried everything I could to lose this game for this team."

The Vanderbilt offense took over on the 23, but soon was forced back. A holding call and a Dansby sack forced a second-and-40 situation. A short run by Dunnivant set up third-and-a-mile from midfield when disaster struck and the defense made its only mistake of the game. Allen dropped back and lofted a perfect pass to a streaking Todd Yoder, who outjumped Ivory Covington for the ball and fell into the end zone for six.

"I was so pumped up, I couldn't have dreamed of anything better than that, with the exception of us winning," Yoder said. "When I saw the ball go up, I knew I had a shot. Damien made a great throw, and I just went up and got it."

"I thought I was back at Miami in 1989," Holtz recalled. "That was a third-and-43 and they made it. But [Yoder] made a great play and they made a great throw."

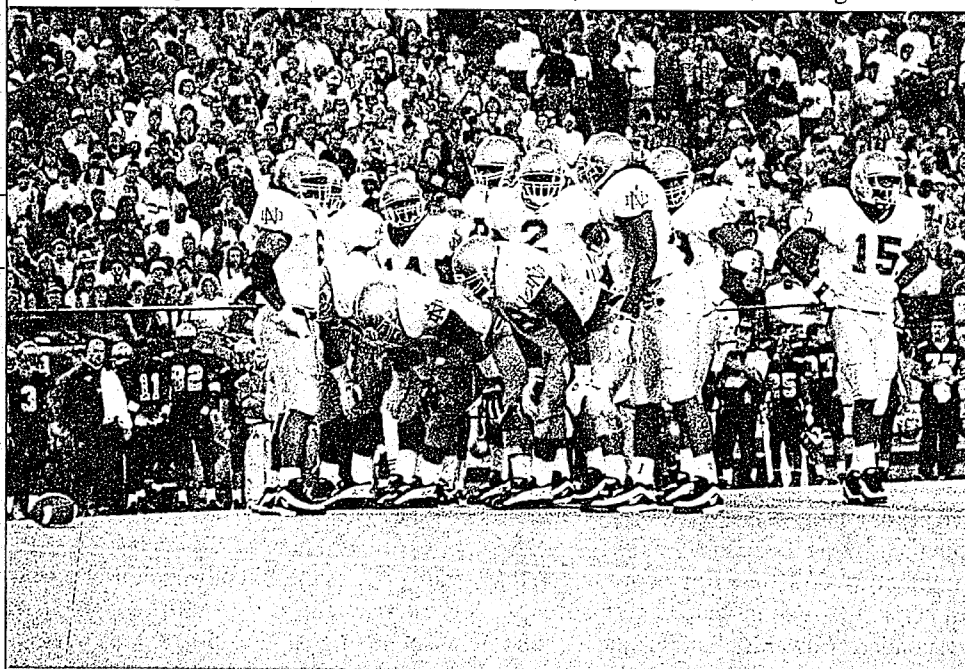
Now trailing 7-6, Notre Dame had to

prove to itself and its fans that it would not lose the season opener to Northwestern, er, Vanderbilt. For the first time all evening, the offense rose to the occasion. Powlus went 5-for-5 for 61 yards on the winning drive, utilizing all his receivers, including freshman Raki Nelson, who caught his first career pass. When not fading back to pass, Powlus could depend on Denson and Edwards, who guarded the ball with their lives while picking up yardage. There were no mistakes as the Irish converted all three third-down opportunities. Finally, it was Edwards who got the call, hitting paydirt from three yards out to put the Irish on top. He then added the two-point conversion to complete the scoring.

"We've all seen the guy who booted the double-play ball and then comes up and hits a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth," Holtz said of Edwards. "He's the hero."

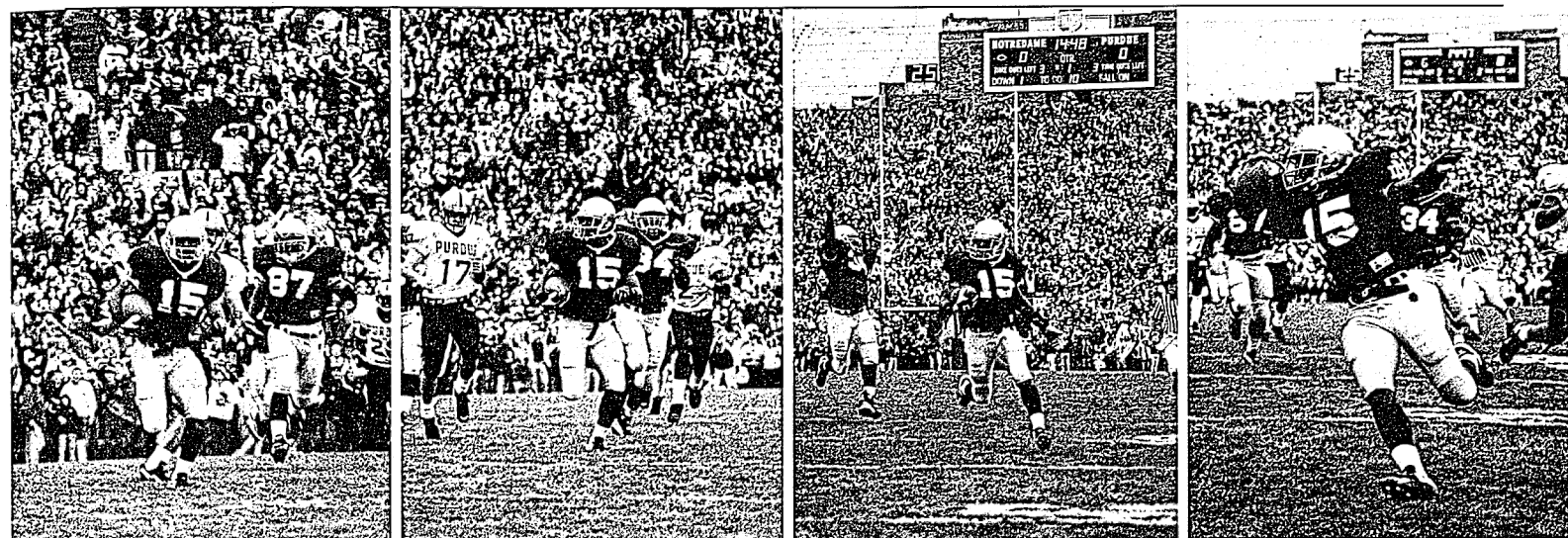
The Commodores still had life, but the defense again stymied them. On first down from his own 36, Allen found Dunnivant out of the backfield. Racing to midfield, he met safety A'Jani Sanders, who knocked the ball loose. Covington scooped it up and the Irish ran out the clock.

Leaving Vanderbilt Stadium, many Irish fans were shocked and dismayed. How did Notre Dame win despite losing four fumbles? Was this merely first-game jitters or a sign of things to come? Answers to these questions would come soon enough as the Irish prepared for the meat of their schedule — Texas, Ohio State and Washington. □



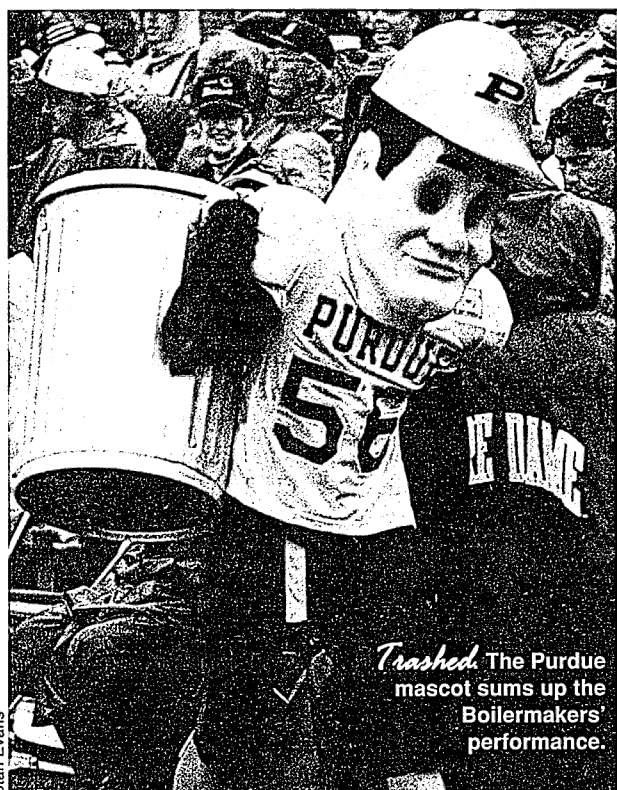
Huddle up. Cornerback Allen Rossum waits for the signal from the sidelines as his teammates catch their breath. The Irish limited Vanderbilt to just 126 total yards.

Bel Hogan



Stan Evans

Blastoff. Return-man extraordinaire Allen Rossum tests out the expanded Notre Dame stadium in style, taking the opening kickoff back 99 yards for a touchdown.



Trashed. The Purdue mascot sums up the Boilermakers' performance.

BACK ON TRACK *Purdue*

BY
FRED
LABREQUE

Purdue has won the toss and elected to defer to the second half." Bad idea. Purdue's fateful decision paved the way for a dramatic opening of the newly expanded (but not yet filled) Notre Dame Stadium. Allen Rossum fielded the kickoff at his own 1-yard line, burst through a huge hole in the middle of the Boilermaker coverage and dashed almost untouched to the end zone. What a way to christen the new home of the Irish.



Bret Hogan

Taking it in stride. Tailback Autry Denson tries to escape a Purdue tackle. He had three touchdowns in the game, two on the ground and one through the air.

Rossum's return foreshadowed what was to come the rest of the afternoon as the Irish rolled to a 35-0 victory over the gutsy but outmanned Boilermakers. This was an important game for Lou Holtz; on this day, he set the record for most games coached at Notre Dame, surpassing Knute Rockne's mark of 122 games. Chasing Rockne would grow in importance to Holtz as he moved

closer to the legendary coach's record for career wins.

The win was also an important confidence booster for the Irish players. Expectations were sky-high as usual before the season began, but reporters and fans alike had expressed their doubts about Notre Dame's prospects after its less-than-convincing win over lowly Vanderbilt the week before. The Purdue game, while it did not erase those doubts, showed that the Irish could manhandle an inferior foe.

Autry Denson was one player who exemplified the day that Notre Dame had. The sophomore tailback was the workhorse for the Irish, running 15 times for 66 yards and a pair of touchdowns, and catching three passes for 61 yards and another score. But in the end, he wanted no credit at all. Instead, he deferred to the men in the trenches, the

offensive line, who had totally dominated Purdue's defense.

"The line did it for me," Denson said after the game. "They made great blocks so that I could have huge holes to run through. We played hard as a team, and we accomplished this as a team."

Notre Dame controlled the game from start to finish. The Irish wasted little time adding to their lead following Rossum's opening kickoff return. After swapping punts with the Boilermakers, the Irish were forced to start their next drive inside their 10-yard line. No problem. They methodically marched 92 yards in 13 plays for their second score of the game.

Though quarterback

Ron Powlus looked shaky in the first few offensive series, he soon settled in and enjoyed a successful game through the air. He finished the day 19 of 32 for 238 yards. Like Denson, Powlus gave credit to his offensive line.

"I have a great group of guys this year that I feel comfortable with," he said. "I know that these guys will do whatever they have to do to protect me and I know that they will always give everything they have."

The Irish continued to put points on the board, but any additional scoring was just icing on the cake. The offense could have taken the day off because the Irish defense was relentless and nearly impenetrable. The Boilermakers gained only 44 yards on the ground and squeaked out just over 200 yards of total offense. The longest play the Notre Dame defense yielded was 22 yards. In fact, the Boilermakers were lucky if they made it out of the backfield; Purdue players were tackled for a loss 10 times during the afternoon.

The defense put forth a strong group effort as six different Irish defenders recorded sacks and nine different defensemen stopped Purdue players in their own backfield.



Stan Evans

Beat like a drum. The Purdue band was one of the few highlights for Boilermaker fans on this dreary day.

"It's great playing with all these guys. It's like playing with a family that will support you," Lyron Cobbins said. "We always look for something to happen and when something happens we do our best to capitalize."

"They are a good defensive team. Their defense from last year is a year older and stronger," added Purdue Head Coach Jim Colletto. "They are a physical bunch of guys. You need a veteran offensive line to deal with the things that they do. A lot of our younger players didn't have the experience to handle it."

Notre Dame's defense controlled the game despite a gutsy performance by Purdue quarterback Billy Dicken. He overcame six sacks and constant harassment to complete 14 of 31 passes.

"We didn't block well and Billy Dicken played as well as can be expected under the circumstances," Colletto said. "The offensive line was no help. We have a lot of problems and need to find some solutions."

While the Notre Dame defense needed no help stopping the Boilermakers, the one thing that was finally able to slow the Irish onslaught was the wet conditions. The Irish scored no points after Denson's third touchdown of the game, which came with 4:20 remaining in the third quarter. Play became sloppy on both sides of the ball in the fourth quarter as the rainy weather took its toll on the athletes and the playing field. But Holtz preferred to focus on what happened before the final stanza.

"Our offense played very well in the first three quarters," he said. "In the first half we got to the 20-yard line and threw an interception and then missed a field goal, but other than that, we did some good things today. In the first three quarters, we had just

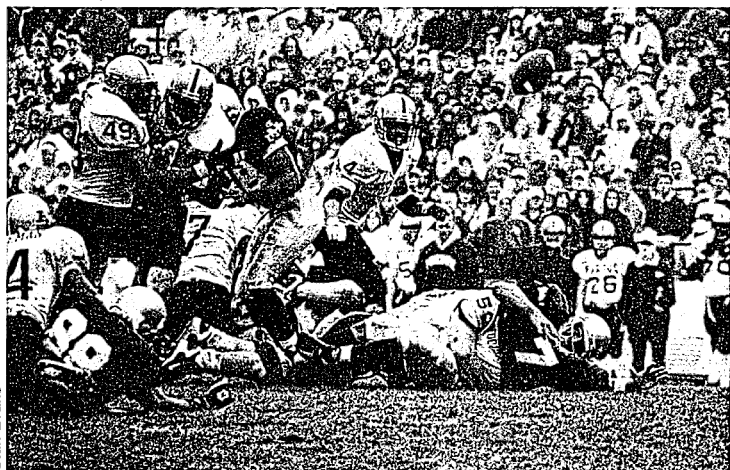
one turnover, the kicking game was good and we had very few penalties."

Inclement weather is nothing new in the Notre Dame-Purdue rivalry. Though pre-game forecasts called for clear skies and little chance of rain, Holtz was not surprised when the rain began to fall just before kickoff. "I don't care what the forecast is, it rains every time we play Purdue," he said. "I can't remember the last time it didn't rain when we played Purdue."

Despite the Irish dominance, there was a bit of excitement in the stands as it became clear that the game would be a blowout. Whispers of, "Do you think Holtz will put him in?" and, "I'd love to see him run the option just once" ran through the crowd. And sure enough, just seconds into the fourth quarter, sophomore quarterback Jarious Jackson trotted onto the field to cheers of delight.

Jackson ran the Irish offense for three series and completed one of two passes for six yards, adding three carries for 24 yards. His short stint also included a botched exchange, a sack and a fumble that was recovered by Purdue. Despite a less-than-spectacular day, Jackson did show glimpses of a bright Notre Dame future. The play on which he turned over the ball, he burst through the line on a simple quarterback draw and was dragging two defenders when the ball popped loose. Though obvious he was not ready quite yet, it appeared that Jackson might be the quarterback Notre Dame has been looking for to lead this team into the future.

Some say all that really matters is that the Irish got another early season victory under their belts. But this was not just a victory over a young but talented team; this was a thorough wallop — one that built up Notre Dame's confidence. With its annual tough schedule, confidence is necessary for the team to be able to compete week in and week out. Though this confidence was sporadic throughout the season, it made its presence felt at the expense of Purdue. □



Sian Evans

Up for grabs. Jarious Jackson fumbles after gaining 21 yards on a quarterback draw. The sophomore looked impressive in limited action.

Game at Glance

Rushing Yards

44	Purdue	215	ND
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Passing Yards

159	Purdue	244	ND
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Total Yardage

203	Purdue	459	ND
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First Downs

13	Purdue	28	ND
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Time of Possession

25:32	Purdue	34:28	ND
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Penalties (Yards)

87	Purdue	13	ND
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SCORING

Purdue	0	0	0	0	0
Notre Dame	14	14	7	0	35

1st Quarter

ND: Rossum 99 kickoff return at 14:47 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Denson 12 run at 4:17 (Sanson PAT)

2nd Quarter

ND: Edwards 1 run at 2:02 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Denson 10 pass from Powlus at :02 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

ND: Denson 2 run at 3:00 (Sanson PAT)

4th Quarter

None

PREGAME AP RANKING: 6th

Heir to the Throne

With the retirement of Lou Holtz on November 19, Bob Davie was thrust into the national spotlight as a potential candidate for the job. Less than a week later, he was named the 26th head coach in Notre Dame history. After the loss at USC, the season was over and Davie was in the driver's seat, leading the team into recruiting season. In his first interview with *Scholastic*, the new coach talks about the transition, Lou Holtz and next season.

BY JEREMY DIXON

Scholastic: What were your feelings when you were hired?

Davie: It was an amazing time because we really didn't know what was going to happen. I was a candidate for the Notre Dame job, but also that week I was offered two other head coaching jobs. I actually turned one of those jobs down. Plus, I had two universities come into my home and interview me. We were getting ready for Rutgers, so we had a football game to play. It was an amazing week. What it really did was give me confidence that through all the hectic times, I could handle that sort of pressure.



WALKING TALL. As defensive coordinator, Davie led his troops to a school-record 41 sacks this season.

S: You have had about six weeks or so to let it sink in. What are your feelings now?

D: I think having been here three years really helps. I know what to expect. That's another thing that gives me confidence. The administration hired me, and, because of my association with them over the last three years, they know what they're getting and it makes me feel comfortable that they know there are not going to be any surprises. And I know what I'm getting into because of having been here. So, on a day-to-day basis, it's exactly what I expected it to be.

S: How difficult has it been to step into this job? What has been the biggest adjustment you have had to make?

D: The biggest adjustment is organizing your time because it's amazing how it's nonstop from the moment you walk in the office. If you're going to get up and jog or try to work out, you better do it early in the morning, because once you walk in, you're not going to leave. It's a never-ending process of staying organized with your time and trying to prioritize what you're going to do. You really don't have much time for yourself. In this job, your work is never going to be done [and] if you don't make time for yourself personally, you're never going to have time.

S: Why did you make the decision to let go of Coaches Joe Moore, Dave Roberts and Earle Mosley?

D: Every coach is different and it's important as a head coach to surround yourself with coaches who really share your philosophy in every area and coaches you are totally comfortable with. I've got great respect for all three of those coaches. I worked with all three on a day-to-day basis. It doesn't mean they are not excellent football coaches; it doesn't mean that I don't have great respect for them. I just think that when you get the opportunity to be a head coach, it's important to make decisions on a long-term basis. And I thought in the long term, in the best interests of this program, with me as the head coach, the best thing to do was to not rehire those coaches.

S: There have been recruits who have expressed concern about how the program will take shape. How have the staff changes affected recruiting?

D: Well, I think any time there is change, it's natural for people to have apprehension. It's something I think we obviously will overcome and I think we'll be stronger because of it. We went back and really evaluated all of the kids we were recruiting, ranked them and spent a lot of time over the holidays watching tapes of them. We're

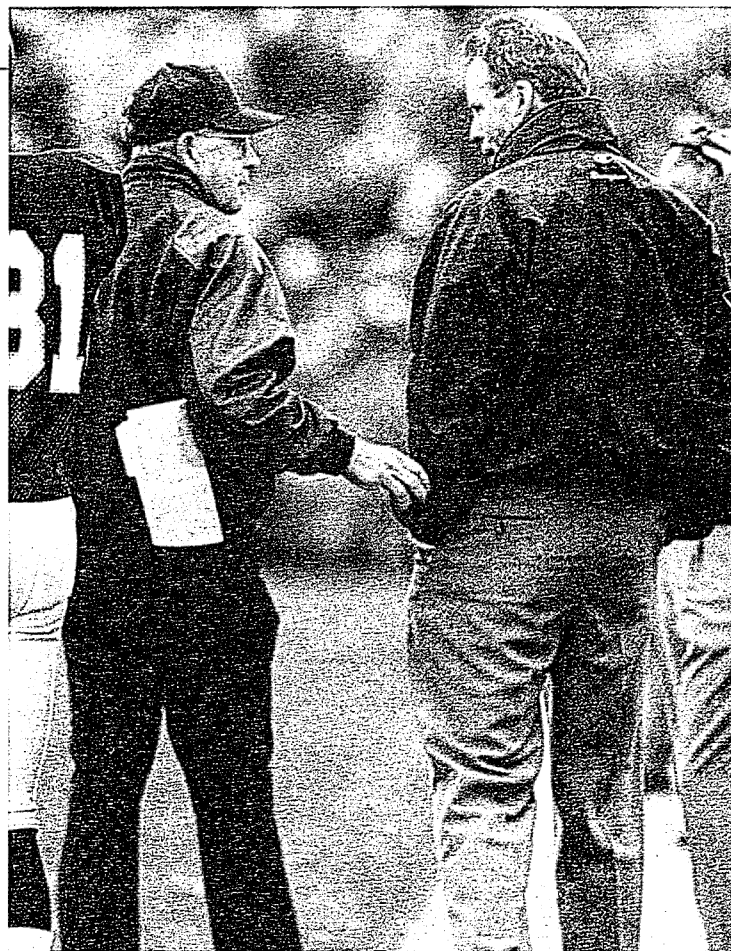
very fortunate we got things pushed back to those last two weekends, which gave us a lot of time. I feel more organized right now in recruiting than I have ever felt.

S: Are you going to allow the coordinators to call the offense and defense, or will you call the plays yourself?

D: Well, I'm going to call the ones that work. So for people out there who don't know who called it, all the ones that are successful are ones I called. Seriously, I'm going to really be involved in every aspect of it, but I'm not going to actually call the plays. I think you always have the right to veto, and I'm going to take a direct role on both sides of the ball as well as the kicking game. I think we hired good coaches—we've got two great coordinators in Dave Mattison and Jim Colletto. I'm going to let them be in charge, that is why they're called the coordinators and they have the ultimate responsibility for how they play. But the ultimate, *ultimate* responsibility is with me because I'm the head coach.

S: What is the biggest change you foresee with the offense next season?

D: Well, I think our offense has been very successful. If you look at it statistically, this past year we finished 10th in the country in total offense. We've been successful primarily because we have run the ball. So the running game hopefully will not change. [In] the passing game, I think we will be more of a drop-back, quicker, shorter passing team. Maybe some shotgun, maybe a little more diversified, substitution package-wise. We might have three wide receivers and two backs or two tight ends, two flankers and one back. Coach Holtz's philosophy was to keep the same personnel on the field. I think [the changes] probably [will be] more drop-back passing, and more formation packages where we try to utilize more



Bret Hogan

CHANGING OF THE GUARD. Davie on his predecessor: "I feel very fortunate to have been associated with him. I know how much he truly loved this university."

pep rally, get up and control the luncheon—it's just the presence he had. I don't think anybody could come in here and match that. ... There are probably a lot more similarities than people might perceive. I probably will be more of a day-to-day, hands-on coach [in] all areas of the program. I enjoy being around the players on a day-to-day basis, and that's something I want to continue to do. You've probably seen me jogging across campus; I don't think you ever saw Coach [Holtz] jogging across campus. That might be it.

S: What do you think Lou Holtz's legacy will be here at Notre Dame?

D: Well, I know what his legacy is with me. I feel very fortunate to have been associated with him. I know how much he truly loved this university. He truly loved Notre Dame and his legacy with me is that he was totally up-front. He cared an awful lot about these players, and he cared a lot about this university. If you look at most successful people, they would all say they had a mentor somewhere along the line, and certainly Lou Holtz is [mine].

S: What is your goal for this team next season?

D: To be the best we can be, but enjoy it along the way and take it one step at a time. Don't put more pressure on the team than needs to be put on them. Don't worry so much about the big picture, worry more about the day-to-day part of it and try to enjoy and savor each minute. That's what is so great about Notre Dame—the atmosphere, particularly during the fall. Hopefully our team will reflect that they really enjoy what they're doing. I think that's contagious. If you look like you're having fun playing and enjoying it, people will have fun watching you and will enjoy it. □

"I probably will be more of a day-to-day, hands-on coach [in] all areas of the program. I enjoy being around the players on a day-to-day basis."

players during the course of the game.

S: And the defense?

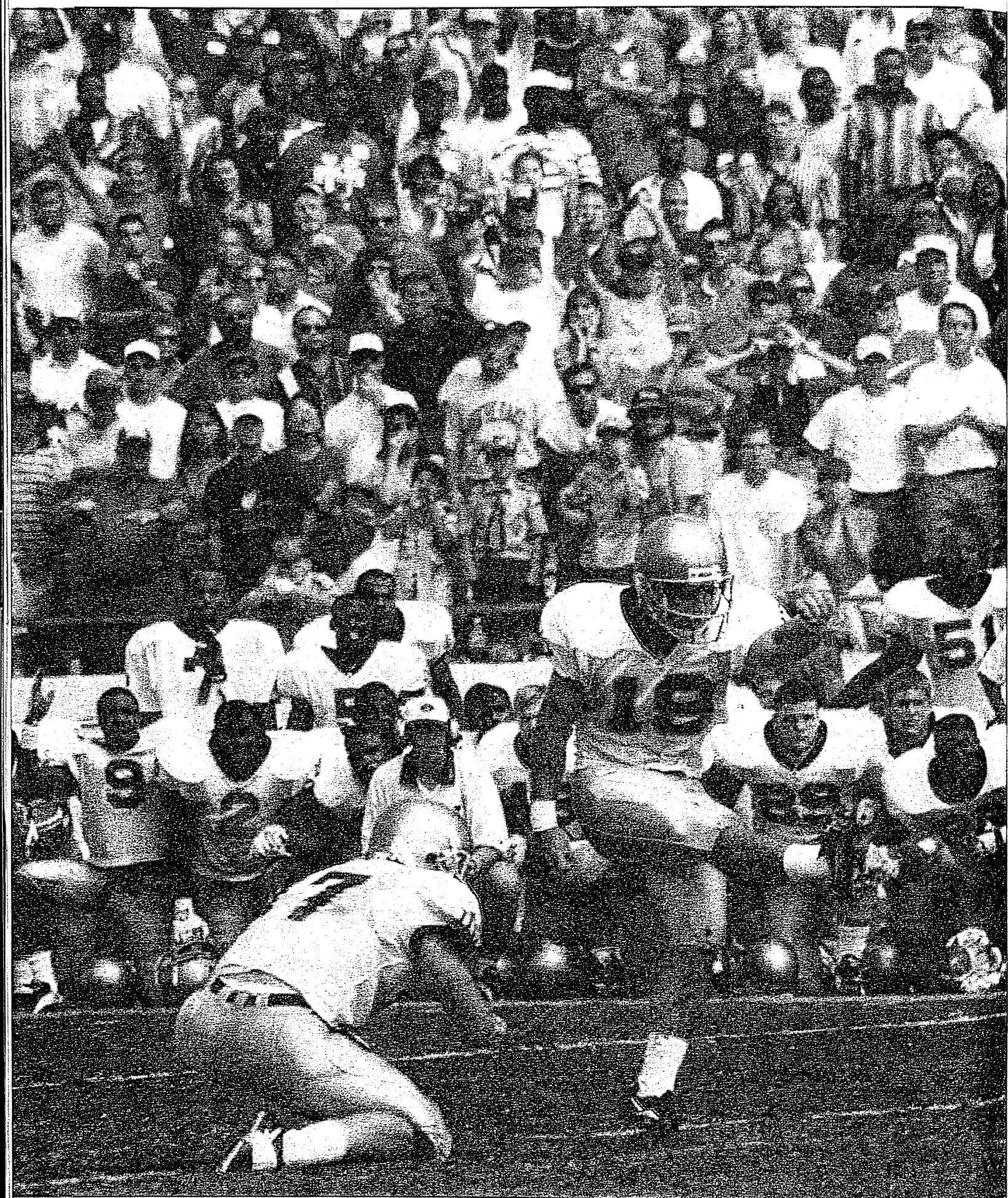
D: I think we'll blitz more, no question. Last year we set a school record for sacks with 41 and I think over the three years we've become more aggressive and become more of a play-making unit forcing the action. I think you'll see a blitzing-style defense without a doubt.

S: What is the strongest similarity between you and Coach Holtz?

D: Competitiveness. That and really enjoying football, and a strong feeling of doing things the right way. He and I were very similar in a lot of ways, that's why we had such a great relationship. We shared a lot of the same beliefs.

S: Biggest difference?

D: I think time will probably tell. Obviously our styles are going to be different—anybody's style's going to be different. Lou Holtz is unique. I was amazed at the way he could get up and control the





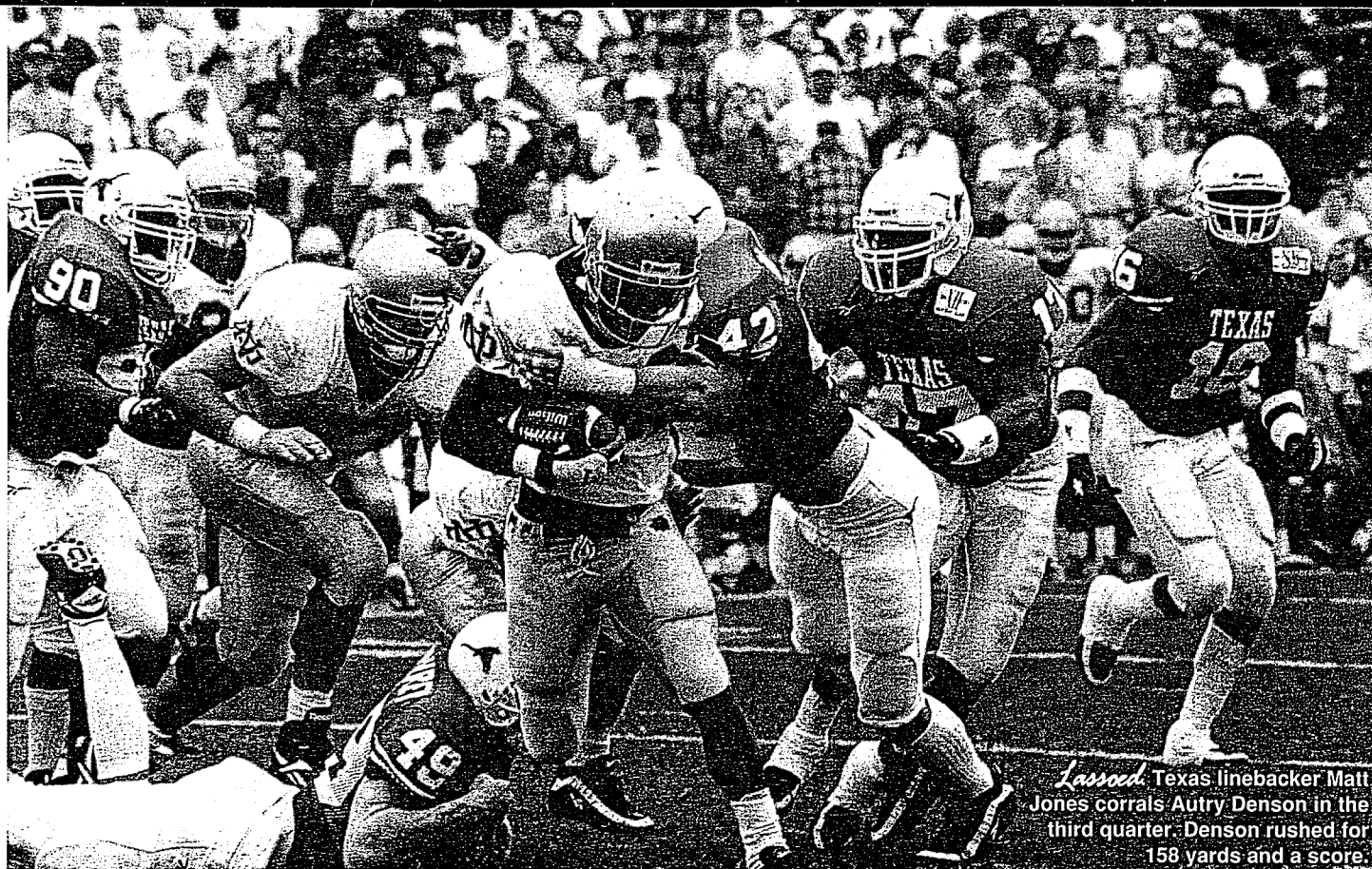
The kick heard round the world. Freshman kicker Jim Sanson sank the hearts of Texas players and fans with his game-winning field goal.

GRADE A COMEBACK *Texas*

BY
PETER
BERGIN

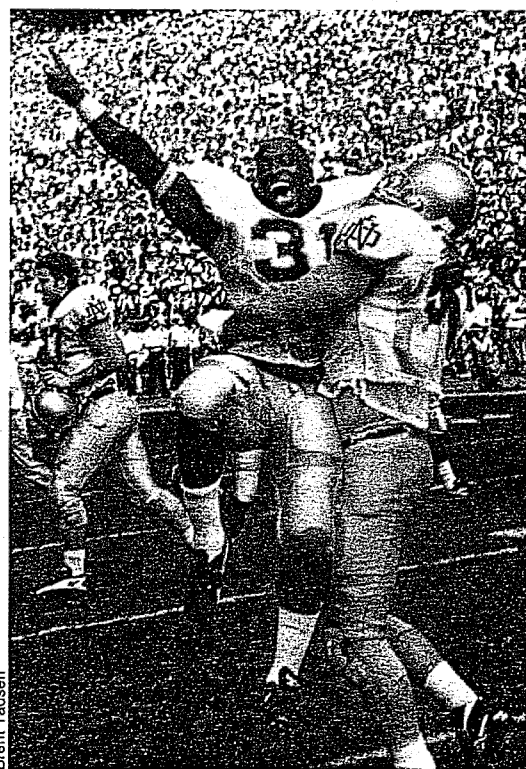
After a double dose of cream puffs to open the season, the Irish were faced with quite a task for their third game: traveling to Austin to butt horns with a Texas team still red with embarrassment after last year's four-touchdown loss. The matchup of top-10 squads lived up to its billing as the score seesawed back and forth before the Irish triumphed 27-24 with a last-second field goal, an ending that has so often gone the other way for the Irish.

Brent Tadsen



Lassoed. Texas linebacker Matt Jones corrals Autry Denson in the third quarter. Denson rushed for 158 yards and a score.

Brent Tadsen



Ecstasy. Robert Farmer shows his excitement at squeaking by the Longhorns.

If this game proved anything, it was that the ghosts of Notre Dame lore, the legendary and elusive luck of the Irish football program — which for the past few years has eluded Lou Holtz's troops — still hovers somewhere above the sea of gold helmets. When the Austin sun broke through the

clouds in the final quarter, a herd of Irish heroes rose to the occasion and carried Notre Dame to its memorable win. Take your pick: Autry Denson, Lyron Cobbins, Jim Sanson or Ron Powlus.

First, a word about Powlus: as the thermostat topped off at around 100 degrees late in the second half and the 83,312 hollering Texans topped off their voices, the Irish quarterback kept his cool, orchestrating consecutive drives that resulted in the game's final 10 points. It wasn't a flawless performance by any means (13-24 for 127 yards and a touchdown), but his poise down the stretch was admirable, especially on his 11-yard strike to Malcolm Johnson to set up Sanson's field goal after overthrowing a wide-open Bobby Brown on the previous play.

"Just to come back the way we did ... I'm very proud of our football team. I knew it would be a hard game, and I knew Texas had an excellent football team," Holtz said after the game. "Notre Dame has been involved in a lot of great games, but I don't know when I've been involved in one where the momentum went back and forth quite like this."

At the start, the contest didn't appear to have the makings of greatness as the Longhorns stampeded a sluggish Irish defense with an 11-play, 80-yard scoring drive. Dangerous wideout Mike Adams burned the Irish secondary for completions of 22

and 14 yards and finished with a 3-yard touchdown lob from quarterback James Brown. Backed by the largest crowd in Texas football history, the Longhorns sent a clear message to the Irish on the opening drive: this is our house and you're in for a long day.

But Notre Dame answered with a 12-play, 82-yard drive of its own, capped by a 20-yard Sanson field goal. The Irish caught a huge break on the third play of the drive when Texas linebacker Tyson King was called for a questionable late hit on Powlus, turning a punting situation into a drive-saving first down. The Irish line then picked up the pace, clearing the way for a 13-yard Marc Edwards romp, a 10-yard Denson spurt and a 28-yard breakaway by Randy Kinder, who was making his season debut. But the offense stalled at the goal line and settled for three points.

Then the Irish secondary, already on its heels, lost starting strong safety A'Jani Sanders to a left knee injury, putting even more pressure on the other starters. Texas went right at the weakened unit early in the second quarter, baiting the safeties toward the line of scrimmage after two strong runs by Ricky Williams, then going to the air. A 16-yard Adams reception and a pass interference call on Ivory Covington advanced the ball to the Irish 20. Three plays later, Priest Holmes burst through the Irish defensive line for a 3-yard score and a 14-3 Texas lead.

At this point, Notre Dame needed an offensive lift, not only to put points on the board, but also to give its tiring defense a breather. A nine-play, 80-yard scoring march satisfied this need, capped by an 18-yard option run by Robert Farmer.

"When we fell behind 14-3 in the first half, it did not look good," Holtz said. "That may have been as critical a drive as we've had in a couple of years."

Critical, yes, but it was more than that. The drive proved that the Irish line was capable of rolling over the Longhorns, and this newfound confidence carried over to the last possession of the half.

Thanks to a combined sack by Bert Berry and Bill Wagasy, a revitalized Irish defense stopped Texas cold for the first time in the game, giving the ball back to Powlus and the offense with 2:37 left in the half. Seven plays and 63 yards later, Marc Edwards glided into the end zone with a 3-yard Powlus toss to give the Irish their first lead of the game. After being outplayed for the majority of the first half, Notre Dame had stormed back to a 17-14 halftime advantage. It wouldn't be the last time they would be forced to come from behind.

The tempo of the third quarter was dictated by the Texas defense. Rock-solid, 290-pound nose guard Chris Atkins rallied a fired-up Longhorn front line that stifled Powlus and the Irish running attack, limiting them to only 67 yards of total offense in the period. The momentum began to swing Texas's way following a 47-yard Phil Dawson field goal and shifted dramatically following Bryant Westbrook's punishing hit on Randy Kinder midway through the quarter. Powlus, unaccustomed to running the option, hung Kinder out to dry on a late pitch, not only taking the Irish offense off the field but Kinder out of the game. At that point, with the sun and the Texas defense heating up, the raucous crowd became the 12th man for the Longhorns.

"We tried to go deep and couldn't get anything going," Holtz said. "They made some halftime adjustments. But we had a little trouble getting continuity with our offensive line, especially when Doughty went down." With the Irish offense sputtering and the noise level rising, a reborn Texas offense trampled the overheated Notre Dame defense with runs of 26 and 16 yards by Ricky Williams and Shon Mitchell, respectively. Williams vaulted the final yard to reclaim the lead for the Longhorns, 24-17.

After another fruitless offensive series, the Irish punted, and Texas took over with only 7:41 left to play. At this point, the Irish defense needed to make a stop — what they got was the play of the game. On second-and-13, Brown was flushed from the pocket by Renaldo Wynn and flipped a wounded duck that bounced off Kory Minor's helmet into the waiting hands of Lyron Cobbins, who got one foot in bounds for the interception.

Given new life, the Irish offense took over at the Texas 34 with only one goal in mind: to get the ball into the end zone. They accomplished this goal eight plays later when Denson took a half-option pitch from Powlus and willed himself into the end zone, diving across the goal line for the tying score. The pressure of this fourth-and-goal play was made even more dramatic by a crowd-induced illegal procedure penalty on the Irish that moved the ball back to the 6-yard line. From there, it was all Denson. Edwards, the lead blocker on the play, went left while the pitch went right. Perhaps the error fooled the Texas defense — then again, perhaps a bit of Irish luck did the fooling.

After yet another defensive stop and a shanked punt, the Irish took over with the game deadlocked at 24 and 59 seconds to play. Denson, the biggest hero of the day, came through once again, slicing through the heart of the Texas defense for 22 yards to the 35-yard line. Following the Powlus-Johnson connection, Sanson split the up-rights for a 39-yard field goal.

Down the stretch, this game was won by the Notre Dame defense. Outplayed at times, it buckled down when it had to and came up with the game's only turnover. The secondary stepped it up as well, as Allen Rossum and Co. corralled Adams in the second half, holding him catchless and limiting the dangerous Brown to two of eight for only 16 yards. Statistically and theatrically, Denson was the star for the Irish, rushing for 158 of Notre Dame's 292 yards on the ground.

In the end, the well-fought battle between Texas and Notre Dame more than lived up to the pregame hype and remains one of the best games of the year. The victory proved that the 1996 Notre Dame squad had faith in itself, a character trait that would show up time and again during the season. While the momentum from this victory failed to carry over to the Ohio State game the following week, the victory over Texas was still a triumph Notre Dame players and fans will never forget. □

Game at a Glance

Rushing Yards

292 ND

134 Texas

Passing Yards

127 ND

178 Texas

Total Yardage

419 ND

312 Texas

First Downs

27 ND

21 Texas

Time of Possession

34:00 ND

26:00 Texas

Penalties (Yards)

76 ND

71 Texas

SCORING

Notre Dame	3	14	0	10	27
Texas	7	7	3	7	24

1st Quarter

UT: Adams 3 pass from Brown at 11:24 (Dawson PAT)

ND: Sanson 20 FG at 5:27

2nd Quarter

UT: Holmes 3 run at 8:30 (Dawson PAT)

ND: Farmer 18 run at 4:08 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Edwards 3 pass from Powlus at :27 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

UT: Dawson 47 FG at 8:09

4th Quarter

UT: Williams 1 run at 10:53 (Dawson PAT)

ND: Denson 6 run at 2:54 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Sanson 39 FG at :00

PREGAME AP RANKING: 9th

The frenzied anticipation leading up to the most publicized game of Notre Dame's season was astounding. The Irish were ranked fifth and coming off a victory over a powerful Texas team. The Buckeyes were ranked fourth and had scored 142 points in their first two games. The faithful of both teams made the pilgrimage to South Bend and were begging for tickets at 10 or 20 times their face value. ESPN *GameDay* was broadcasting from a temporary studio on campus. Scott O'Grady and Jenny McCarthy both made appearances at the pep rally. This had all the marks of a big game.

B U R S T B U B B L E *Ohio State*

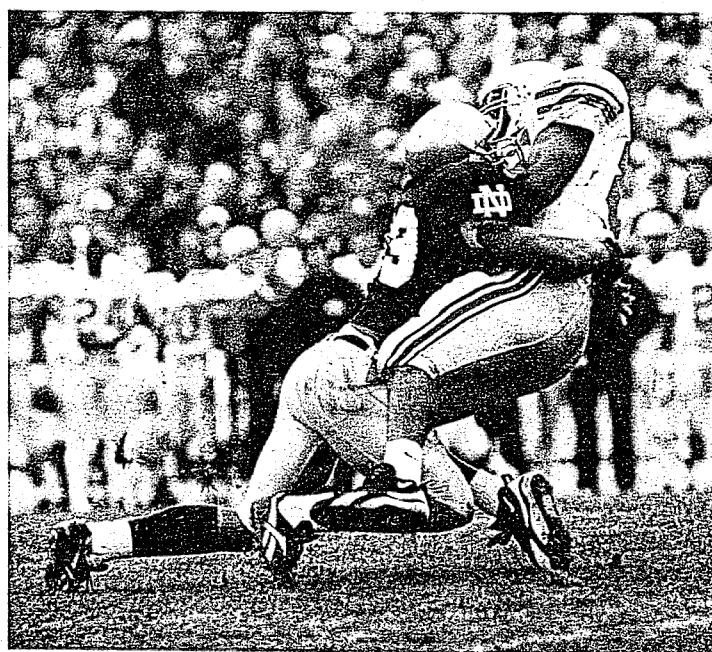
BY
FRED
LABREQUE

There had to be two separate pregame pep rallies to channel all the excitement of the Irish fans. Head Coach Lou Holtz was so flooded with interview requests from local radio stations that he had to refuse some of them. And on game day, campus was an absolute zoo. One local television station estimated that there were more than 200,000 people on campus before the start of the game. Unfortunately for most of them, the stadium still only had about 60,000 seats, and they were all spoken for. Clearly this was going to be a big one.

And the leader of the Fighting Irish was a little uneasy. Holtz doesn't like to be around so much hoopla and doesn't like his players to be around it, either.

"I love playing a top-ranked team, but I don't like playing them at home," he said. "I mentioned that to the football team last Thursday [before the Texas game]. I said one good thing about this is that we are going on the road to play this big game. All the reporters are down there in Austin, Texas, so all the fanfare and excitement and the newspaper and the interviews and everything else, was somewhere else."

Maybe Holtz would have rather played this game in Columbus, Ohio. As he said before the game, "When you start feeling it early here, it is a disadvantage because of all the distractions. People come to the game, your families come to the game, people want



Meet Benny Guilbeaux. As this Buckeye discovered, the Irish safety does not shy away from contact. Guilbeaux recorded nine tackles against Ohio State.



Return to sender. Jarvis Edison may have jumped higher, but Benny Guilbeaux got his paw on this Ohio State kick.

tickets." These were all reasons why Lou Holtz was worried going into the biggest game of the year. And they were the least of his problems.

The Buckeyes came into the game averaging 71 points and 617 yards in their two wins while surrendering a mere 3.5 points and 169 yards per game. They had had 10 scoring drives of less than two minutes, including one that took just 13 seconds. Finally, Ohio State's David Boston returned a punt 66 yards for a touchdown against Pitt when the Buckeyes had only eight men on the field. No wonder Holtz was concerned.

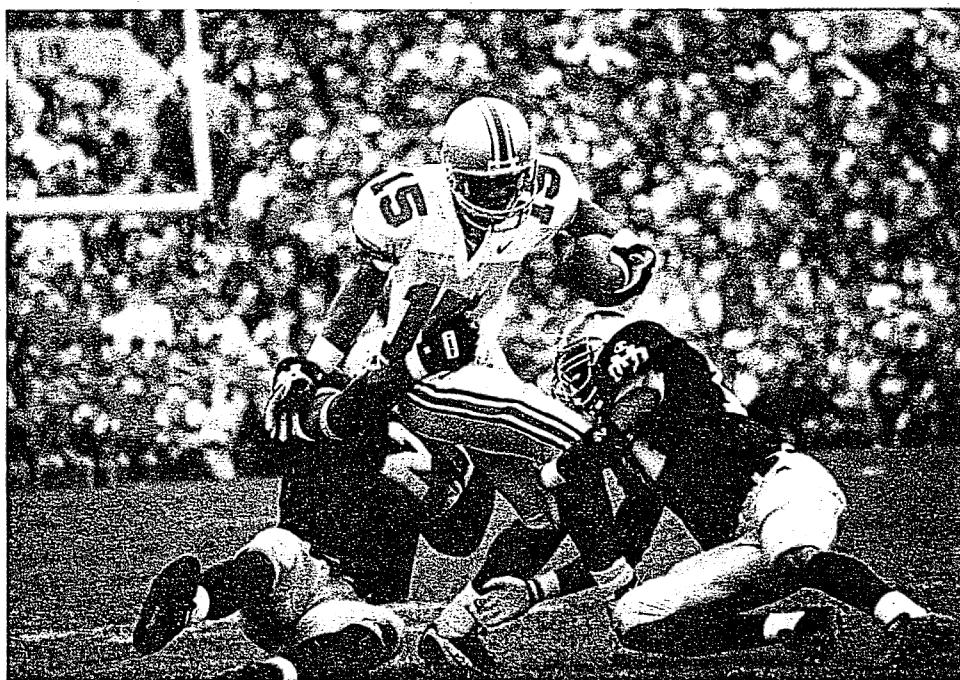
As it turned out, his worries were well-founded. When the game finally did roll around, Ohio State proved that its two early-season victories over weak competition had not been flukes. The Buckeyes jumped to an early lead and held on for a 29-16 victory. They might not have scored 70 points or held Notre Dame to single digits, but they did enough to win.

In the end, it was not the distractions that hurt the Irish, but two young men named Pepe and Orlando. Junior tailback Pepe Pearson piled up 173 yards on 29 carries and broke the goal line twice. Though he had put up similar numbers in his first two games, it was this performance against Notre Dame's touted defense that proved to doubters that the Buckeyes would not miss Eddie George.

Of course, Pearson did all of this just as his predecessor had — by following giant number 75. Orlando Pace, the All-Everything offensive tackle whom Ohio State Head Coach John Cooper describes as "a 6'6", 330 pound cat," showed the nation why he had been chosen as the team's candidate for the Heisman Trophy. With an

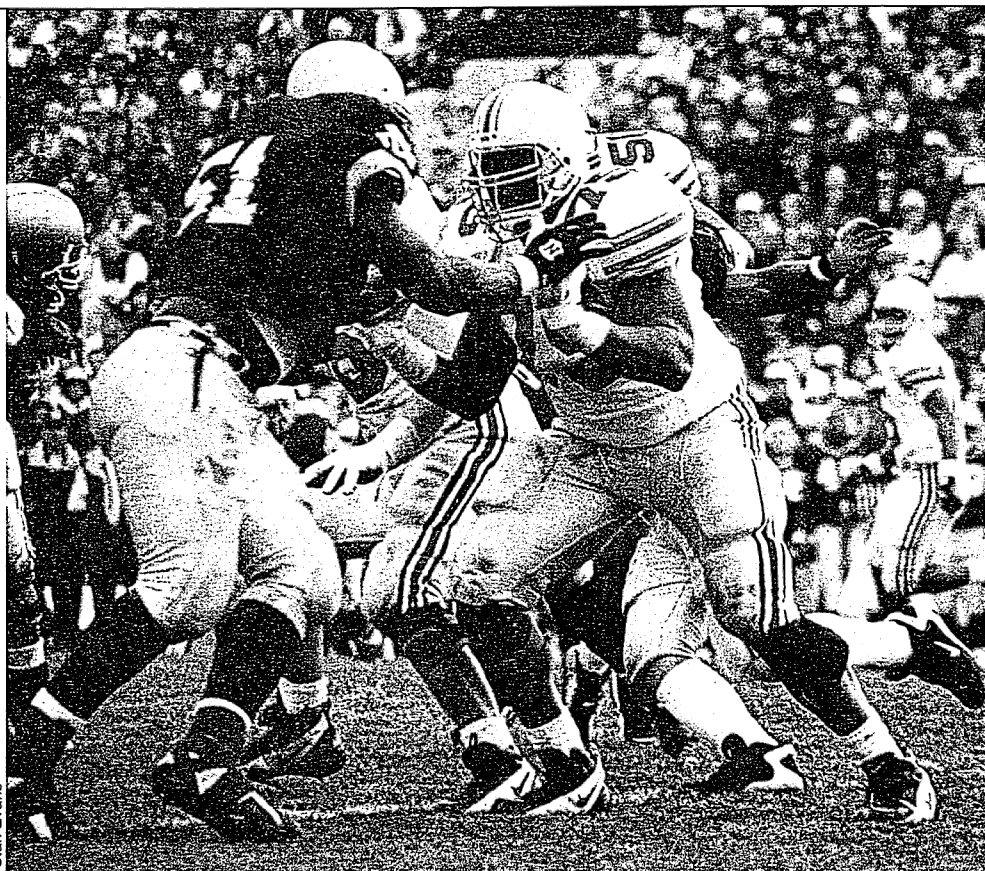
unmatched combination of size, speed, strength and agility, Pace dominated the left side of the line just as he has ever since he started the first game of his freshman year. It was Pace's pancakes that allowed Pearson to have such a productive day.

But the afternoon was not without its bright spots for Notre Dame. After Ohio



Hanging on. Kinnon Tatum tries to tackle Buckeye receiver Dee Miller.

State took an early 6-0 lead on a short run by Pearson, there was no more scoring until late in the first quarter. With the Buckeyes deep in their own territory, Lamont Bryant tipped a Stanley Jackson pass and Kinnon Tatum came up with the interception. The turnover set up a short touchdown pass from Ron Powlus to Marc Edwards and, with Jim Sanson's extra point, the Irish were temporarily ahead. But this lead was short-lived as Ohio State took the ensuing kickoff and marched 80 yards in seven plays for the score. Notre Dame



Stan Evans

Setting the Pace. Defensive tackle Melvin Dansby found it tough getting around the brick wall named Orlando Pace.

never recovered from this deficit as the Buckeyes built a 22-7 halftime lead.

After a strong drive to start the second half, Notre Dame had to settle for a field goal. The Irish defense then gave up Jackson's second touchdown pass, and the extra point put the Buckeyes comfortably ahead by 19 points. But the Irish came roaring back. With about seven minutes remaining in the game, Edwards scored his

second touchdown of the game, this time on the ground, to shave the Buckeyes's lead to 13 points. After this score, the Irish defense held and forced Ohio State to punt. Notre Dame seemed poised for a dramatic comeback as everyone in the stadium, especially Autry Denson standing on his own 10-yard line, awaited the kick.

Brent Bartholomew's punt went right to Denson, who fielded the ball cleanly and streaked down the middle of the field for a dramatic touchdown. The Irish fans were in a state of delirium until they saw the little yellow flag back on the 20-yard line. Jaws dropped and hearts sank in disbelief. Never had the Irish fans experienced such a high and then such a low in such a short period of time. Well, maybe once ... or twice. Remember Rocket's punt return against Colorado in 1991? The curse of Irish miscues on punts returned for touchdowns continued as Notre Dame was called for holding and the ball was placed on the Irish 10. The game was essentially over.

"When Autry Denson

started to run it back, the first thing I did was look downfield for a flag and I didn't see one," Holtz said. "After it was called back, I knew we had no chance to win."

"That one play, the punt return, could have turned the whole thing around," Edwards added. It was a devastating blow to the Irish and one from which they would not recover.

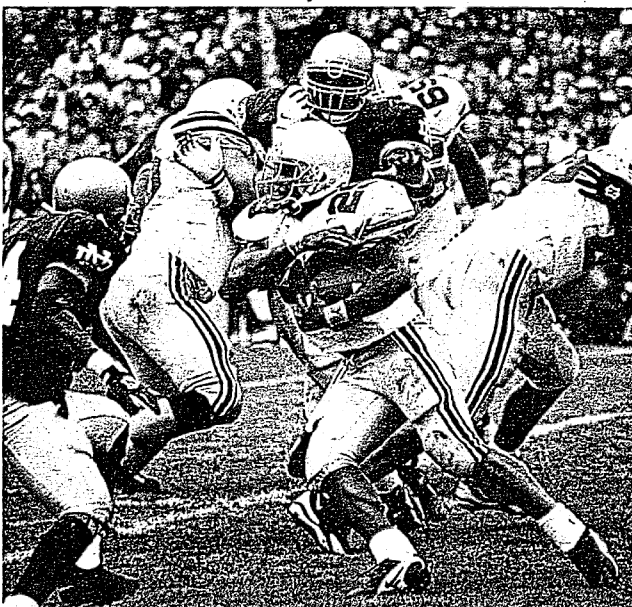
Ohio State proved that it was among the best teams in the nation, and Notre Dame put up a respectable showing against this powerhouse. The Irish offense had trouble moving the ball all day, as exemplified by Ron Powlus's final passing statistics: 13 for 30 with two interceptions and just 154 yards. The Irish gained only 280 yards of total offense.

"In the second half, I thought we played as well as we could have played, but we couldn't stop their third-down plays," Holtz said. "We couldn't control the line of scrimmage." Ohio State was just too big and strong up front and too quick at the skill positions for the Irish to have any success.

Cooper was ecstatic about the victory. "I told our squad that this is a great victory for Ohio State, the players and the fans," he said after the game. "It doesn't get much better. Not many teams can come in here and win against this great Notre Dame football team."

He also praised Powlus despite the

Pearson the defense. Buckeye tailback Pepe Pearson shredded the Irish D for 173 yards and two touchdowns.



Stan Evans



Sian Evans

Brutus the Buckeye. Ohio State's mascot was all smiles after his team's convincing victory.

quarterback's lackluster day. "We controlled the tempo and put a lot of pressure on Ron Powlus with our defense," he said. "That is a credit to him. We had to keep him off-balance. He is an excellent quarterback."

The better team won this game, but one of the deciding factors may have been all the distractions and jitters accompanying such sheer madness. Even though he has a reputation for not being able to win the big games, Cooper appeared cool and calm throughout. When asked what his feelings had been before the game, he responded, "I wasn't nervous going into the game. Once we started playing, I felt we were as good as them, maybe even a little bit better."

What an understatement. For the rest of the season, Ohio State continued to prove that it was among the nation's elite football teams, while the Irish struggled all year against inferior opponents. The Buckeyes were clearly the best opponent the Irish faced and Notre Dame battled hard. But it was not enough. As Holtz said, "The better team won today, make no mistake about that." □

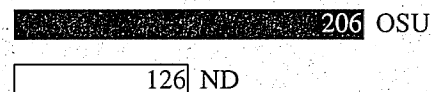


Sian Evans

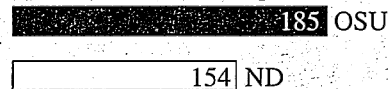
The agony of defeat. The pain of dashed national championship hopes shows on Lou Holtz's face.

Game at a Glance

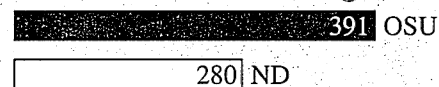
Rushing Yards



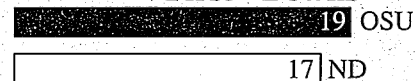
Passing Yards



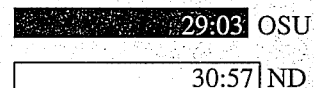
Total Yardage



First Downs



Time of Possession



Penalties (Yards)



SCORING

Ohio State	12	10	7	0	29
Notre Dame	7	0	3	6	16

1st Quarter

OSU: Pearson 3 run at 13:15 (run failed)
 ND: Edwards 2 pass from Powlus at 6:05 (Sanson PAT)
 OSU: Calhoun 2 pass from S. Jackson at 3:37 (run failed)

2nd Quarter

OSU: J. Jackson 24 FG at 3:52
 OSU: Pearson 1 run at :54 (J. Jackson PAT)

3rd Quarter

ND: Sanson 26 FG at 9:47
 OSU: Jones 13 pass from S. Jackson at 1:44 (J. Jackson PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Edwards 9 run at 7:01 (Sanson PAT blocked)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 5th

OFFENSIVE REBOUND

BY
JAKE
SCHALLER

Washington

iddle me this: What has power, speed, efficiency, desire, toughness and wears gold?

Michael Johnson?

What, not who.

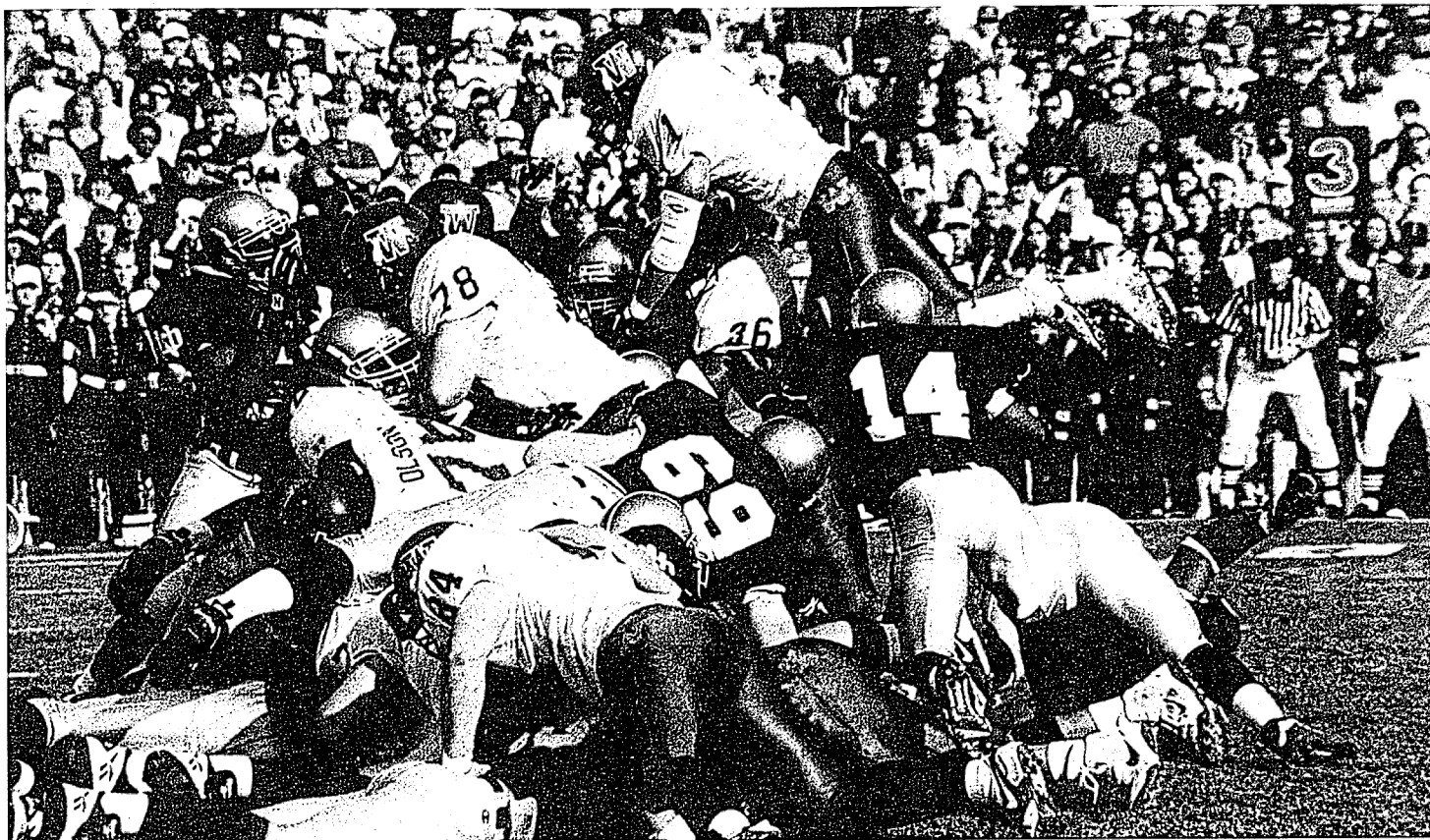
I give up.

The Notre Dame Fighting Irish.

What? You mean the team that was manhandled by Ohio State? The team that couldn't pass against nine-man fronts? The "power rushing" team that was held to less than 3 yards and no clouds of dust per carry? The team that made a lineman look like the top choice for the Heisman? The team with the quarterback who said, "The national championship is over?" The team that looked ready to look to next year? That one?

No, not that one. The new Notre Dame Fighting Irish. What?

The new Notre Dame Fighting Irish. The team that dominated a Washington squad hungry for revenge. The team that racked up 650 yards, the most against a Husky team since Washington started keeping total yardage records. The team that comes at defenses with blazing speed and savage power in the form of fresh face after fresh face in the backfield and monstrous men on the offensive line. The team that averages 23 yards per reception. The new Notre Dame Fighting Irish.



Over the top. Washington tailback Rashaan Shehee catapults for a touchdown in the second quarter. The score closed the deficit to 12 before the Irish exploded for 21 points.

Notre Dame's 1996 football season was reborn against Washington two weeks after a crushing loss to Ohio State and a fall from title contention. The Irish faced a Husky team bent on payback after they had stolen a victory last year in the game's waning minutes.

But Notre Dame denied the Huskies their revenge and, in the process, put to rest any questions about pride with a 54-20 thumping.

How did they do it? The phrase "back to basics" isn't a cliché for nothing. The Irish simplified their entire game plan to bounce back. And it started at the top with Lou Holtz abandoning his traditional headset so he would have less distractions and a clearer head. "Sometimes there are too many people talking and I don't think well enough," he said.

He seemed to think well enough against the Huskies as almost everything he called gained yardage.

The rushing attack? "Notre Dame football is all about running the football, and it was just an awesome display of that," tight end Pete Chryplewicz said.

The passing attack? "Eleven for 16, that's more like it," Holtz said, referring to the combined passing numbers of Ron Powlus

and Jarious Jackson. "I'm happy we went back to the things I think our talent enables us to do."

Notre Dame's rebirth was symbolized by Deke Cooper and Shannon Stephens, two underclassmen whose first big plays in the blue and gold were keys to victory. A converted safety, Cooper wasted no time making his mark in his first start, intercepting Brock Huard on the Huskies' third play from scrimmage.

The pick set up the Irish on Washington's 38-yard line and started a 26-point explosion as they found the end zone on four of their first five possessions.

Autry Denson started the deluge by bursting up the middle, breaking a tackle and using a Malcolm Johnson block to hit paydirt. The 33-yard score was the longest of Denson's career — until he broke loose for 47 in the third quarter.

Denson led the way for the Irish ground attack, racking up 137 yards on 14 carries. But his fifth career 100-yard game was only part of the story as the entire Notre Dame stable got involved. Fullback Jamie Spencer scored his first career touchdown from 16 yards out, and senior tailbacks Randy Kinder and Robert Farmer each scored on second-half jaunts.

After running with little success against Ohio State, the Irish rushing attack was resurrected to the tune of 397 yards. On 15 first-quarter carries alone, the Irish gained 132 yards, eclipsing the total they achieved against the Buckeyes.

"They dominated the line of scrimmage and their running backs picked the holes," Husky linebacker Jason Chorak said. "We had a good scheme, but their line pounded us."

"It was amazing," Kinder said. "This is how I remember it. As a freshman, I came in here and the holes were huge. That's how it was today. These guys played to their fullest."

Powlus improved as well, posting the super-efficient numbers Lou Holtz loves. On only 12 attempts, Powlus completed eight for 194 yards and three touchdowns with no interceptions.

All three Powlus scoring strikes came in the third quarter. First, on the Washington 6-yard line, Powlus displayed some mobility, ducking pressure to find Chryplewicz in the back of the end zone. Later, he showed off his arm strength on a 29-yard laser beam to Chryplewicz. Spreading the wealth, Powlus ended his air show by heaving a 45-yard bomb to Malcolm Johnson at the end of

Game at a Glance

Rushing Yards

111 Washington
397 ND

Passing Yards

146 Washington
253 ND

Total Yardage

257 Washington
650 ND

First Downs

16 Washington
31 ND

Time of Possession

28:46 Washington
31:14 ND

Penalties (Yards)

51 Washington
61 ND

SCORING

Washington	0	14	0	6	20
Notre Dame	14	12	21	7	54

1st Quarter

ND: Denson 33 run at 13:30 (Sanson PAT)
ND: Spencer 16 run at 4:18 (Sanson PAT)

2nd Quarter

ND: Kinder 2 run at 10:47 (Sanson PAT blocked)
ND: Farmer 21 run at 8:37 (run failed)
UW: Dillon 11 run at 4:51 (Wales PAT)
UW: Shehee 1 run at 2:54 (Wales PAT)

3rd Quarter

ND: Chryplewicz 6 pass from Powlus at 11:45 (Sanson PAT)
ND: Chryplewicz 29 pass from Powlus at 2:18 (Sanson PAT)
ND: Johnson 45 pass from Powlus at :16 (Sanson PAT)

4th Quarter

UW: Dillon 15 run at 10:23 (pass failed)
ND: Stephens 23 pass from Jackson at 3:45 (Sanson PAT)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 11th

the quarter.

Powlus also found a new target in Stephens. The sophomore speedster hauled in a 42-yard Powlus pass in the second quarter. His first career reception, it ignited the fourth scoring drive of the first half.

Stephens later caught a scoring strike from backup quarterback Jackson. The option quarterback was quietly effective in his relief duty, completing three of four passes for 59 yards and the touchdown.

All told, the Irish played their most solid game to date. But it was not without a few lapses. After securing the 26-point cushion in the first half, the Irish hands became slippery. The Huskies made it 26-7 on a Corey Dillon touchdown run, and then an Allen Rossum fumble on the ensuing kickoff set up the Huskies in Irish territory. Washington's Rashaan Shehee capped a five-play, 22-yard drive by jumping over the pile from two yards out.

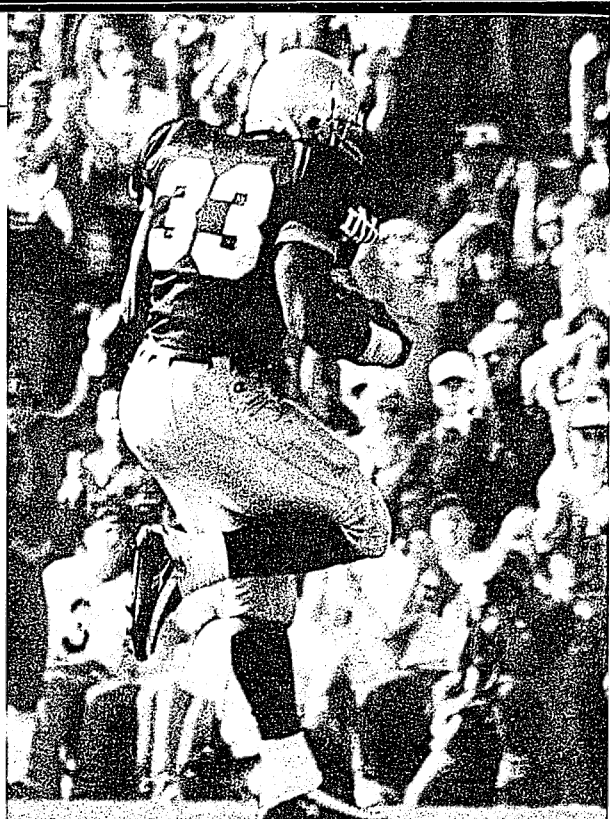
With the Huskies now down only 12, the Irish handed the ball right back. Three plays into the following Irish drive, a botched center exchange was the culprit, and Washington had the ball in Irish territory again. But tough defensive play forced the Huskies to attempt a field goal and John Wales missed the 27-yarder after holder Shane Fortney bobbled the snap. Still, it seemed the Irish had opened the door enough for a second-half Husky comeback.

"We had momentum at halftime. We felt good even though we missed the field goal," Husky linebacker Jerry Jensen said.

Notre Dame seized the momentum right back at the start of the second half, methodically marching 80 yards in seven plays to go up 19 points. On a third-and-two call from the Irish 28, Denson took a handoff up the middle, broke to the outside behind a Mike Rosenthal block and scampered 47 yards to the Washington 25. Four plays later, Powlus found Chryplewicz for the first of his three scoring tosses.

"[Notre Dame's turnovers] gave us life at halftime," Lambright said. "But they took it away with their drive at the start of the second half."

While Powlus continued his aerial display, Notre Dame's defense, punctuated by Bert Berry's hand-pumping to the student section, forced the Huskies three and out on



Spencer for hire. Sophomore fullback Jamie Spencer finds the end zone in the first quarter to give the Irish a 14-0 lead.

their next three possessions. The unit also forced Huard from the game with its constant pressure and tough hitting. "Brock Huard got knocked a little silly and didn't know where he was," Lambright explained.

After reestablishing himself and his team, Powlus took time to explain his post-Ohio State game comments. "I'm very disappointed in the way [the remarks] were conveyed in the media," said Powlus. "Every single person here knows what I meant and certain people decided to take it out of context and make me look bad."

But the media couldn't say or write anything to make the Irish look bad after Washington. The year's most impressive victory gave the Irish some vindication.

"I thought we played very well, with the exception of one five-to-six-minute stretch," Holtz remarked. "We knew going in that the key would be to control the ball. This was somewhat of a concern with them only giving up 2.8 yards per rush, but the control was important."

Important indeed. Important enough to stake an almost insurmountable lead and set up the precise passing attack. And important enough for another riddle:

What's purple and bruised and run all over?

I can hardly imagine.

Give you a hint: After the game, Johnson said, "It's fun to watch other teams go back like they're on roller skates."

Get it?



Super Cooper

Freshman safety Deke Cooper emerged from the pack of rookies to show glimpses of a bright future

BY ALYSSA PETERSON

You may not recognize the name John Delvicchio Cooper, but his nickname, "Deke," has become quite familiar to most Notre Dame football followers. And the jersey Cooper wears is no stranger to the football field, either.

The freshman safety sports the number made popular by his predecessor, wide receiver Derrick Mayes — one. And Cooper's football skills have been compared to those of the former number one since his sophomore year of high school.

Although Cooper's quiet personality is a sharp contrast to that of Mayes, he is expected to share similar success on the field, but at a different position.

Cooper was recruited and began his college career as a wide receiver. But after injuries to Benny Guilbeaux and A'Jani Sanders, Cooper found himself breaking up passes rather than catching them. "Coming in, I expected to earn a starting position, but not on this side of the ball," he says.

An All-State free safety at Evansville (Ind.) North High School after he moved there from Georgia, Cooper claims the change required more than just a switch on the field. "Because I changed to defense in midseason, I needed weeks of meetings with the coaches to learn how they wanted me to play the position."

Fellow freshman and defensive back Deveron Harper believes Cooper has risen to the challenge of a starting position. "I think it's great he's gotten the opportunity to play so much," he says. "He's really stepped up."

Cooper and Harper, along with classmates Joe Ferrer and Lance

Legree, make up a practically inseparable foursome. The support of his classmates has eased Cooper's adjustment to Notre Dame life, especially the academics. "The hardest adjustment was getting used to the studies and figuring out my hectic schedule," he admits.

Along with the position switch and academic transition, Cooper also finds himself in a new religious environment. As the son of a minister, Cooper was raised in a strict Pentecostal environment. He never thought he would be at a Catholic university but claims the transition has not been too difficult. "I just have to understand the Catholic teachings so I can pass my theology course," he jokes.

John Delvicchio is also the name of Cooper's father, who began calling his son "Deke" at a young age. They live in Evansville, which has allowed Cooper's favorite fan to attend home games. "I don't have a lot of self-confidence, but my dad is always encouraging me," he says.

His father was particularly supportive during Deke's senior year of high school when recruiting analysts overlooked him as a top prospect. "My dad told me, 'It only matters how you produce once you get to college; what you do in high school isn't as important.'" Cooper modestly agrees that his impressive debut may have proved the pundits wrong. "I guess I'm doing pretty good so far," he says.

"Pretty good" means six starts, 29 tackles and three interceptions — second on the team to Guilbeaux's four. He sparked Notre Dame's blowout of Washington by picking off a Brock Huard pass on the third play from scrimmage.

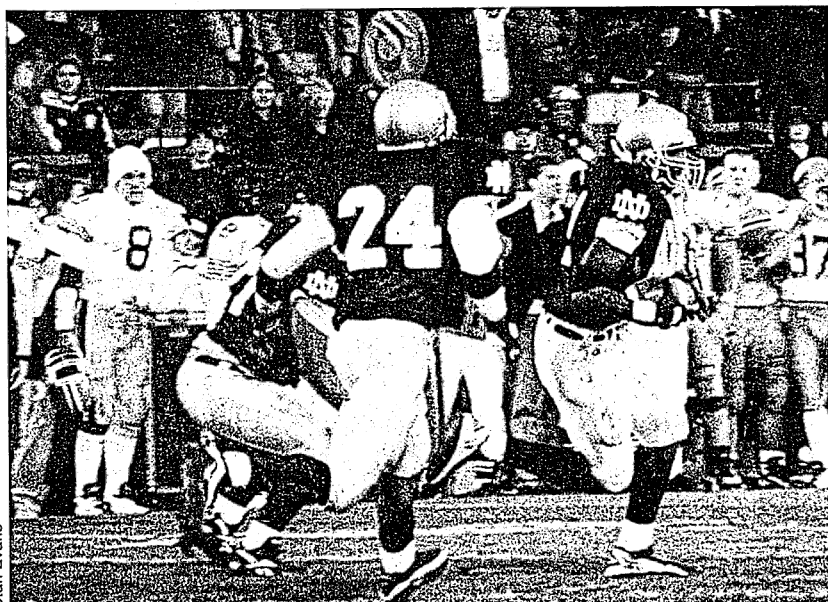
One thing that Cooper plans to improve is his size and strength. "I was really nervous the first few games because I felt like a little freshman up against juniors and seniors who were three times my size," recalls Cooper, who is 6'4" and 205 pounds. "But as the season continued and the coaches gained confidence in me, I realized I could play with them."

Cooper also admits another weakness — being too anxious when reading a pass. "When I see the ball thrown, I come flying up," he says, smiling. "Coach McMahon gets on me about that, but he's been patient and we're working on it."

After just one semester, Cooper already has plans for a future in the business world. Although he has not ruled out a career in the NFL, he is skeptical about playing with the big boys. "This adjustment was hard enough," he says. "I'm just going to wait and see what happens when the time comes."

For the time being, Cooper is amazed by the fame that comes with being a Notre Dame football player. On an off-weekend, he went home to watch a football game at his high school, but he didn't catch much of it because the visit turned into a two-hour autograph session.

If this season is any indication, he had better get used to writer's cramps. □

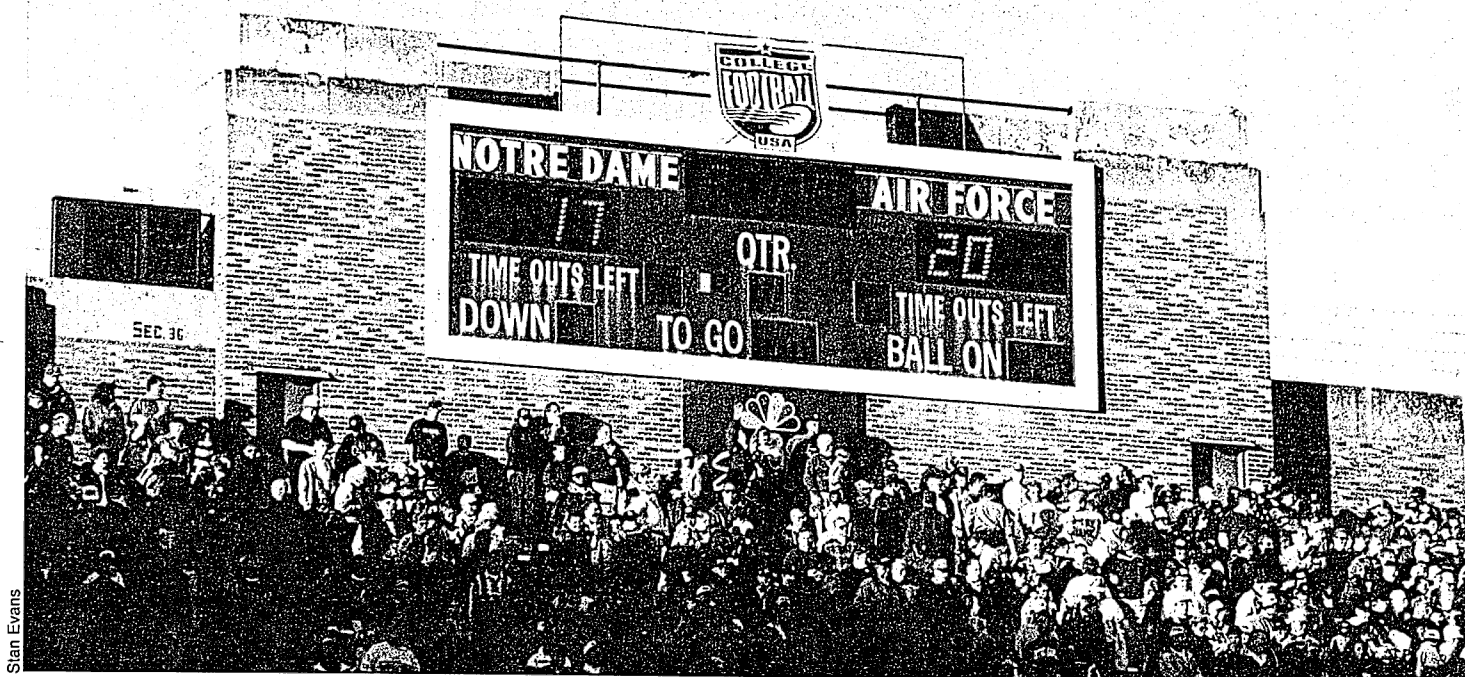


Stan Evans

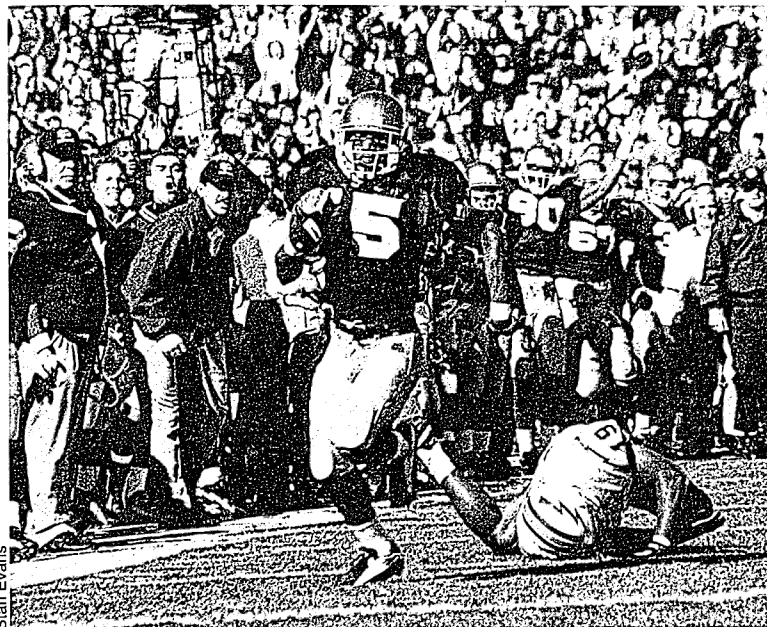
PICKED OFF. Cooper intercepts Pitt quarterback Tony Zimmerman's pass late in the game. The freshman safety had three interceptions during the season.

F R E E F A L L *Air Force*

BY
BRIAN
HIRO



October 19, 1996, was nothing short of the day a season died. On the road back to its rightful place atop the college football world, Notre Dame could perhaps be forgiven for stumbling against Ohio State, a team that has stockpiled so much talent over the past few years that the New York Jets might consider swapping rosters. Heck, with the way the Buckeyes were cruising through their schedule and up the polls, their domination of the Irish was beginning to look downright *sensible*.



Blown away. Allen Rossum returns a punt 57 yards to put the Irish ahead in the first quarter. Irish highlight reels stopped soon thereafter.

But Air Force? Sure, those scrappy service academies sometimes give the Irish fits with their pint-sized but cerebral quarterbacks and wishbone-them-to-death game plans. But Notre Dame's superior athleticism eventually wears them down. It's not like the Falcons could actually win ... in Notre Dame Stadium. Could they?

Air Force answered that question with a resounding thud — the sound of kicker Dallas Thompson booting a 27-yard field goal on the second series of overtime to silence an already quiet crowd and complete an improbable 20-17 victory over the Irish. With one swing of the leg, the Falcons had pulled off one of the season's biggest upsets, ended Notre Dame's slim national championship hopes and, some say, sealed Lou Holtz's fate at the school.

How did it happen? Look no further than the trenches. Two weeks after racking up 397 rushing yards against a strong Washington team, the Irish could manage just a paltry 67 versus the Falcons, the fewest in Holtz's 11 seasons. On the other side of the ball, the Air Force wishbone shredded the Irish defense for 304 yards on the ground, including 183 by senior quarterback Beau Morgan, who only seems like he has been around since the last time Air Force beat Notre Dame in 1985.

"I wish to congratulate Air Force for an excellent football game," Holtz said after the game. "They beat us up front. They didn't make mistakes and we made far too many mistakes. ... We didn't run the football well.

"Basically, they controlled the line of

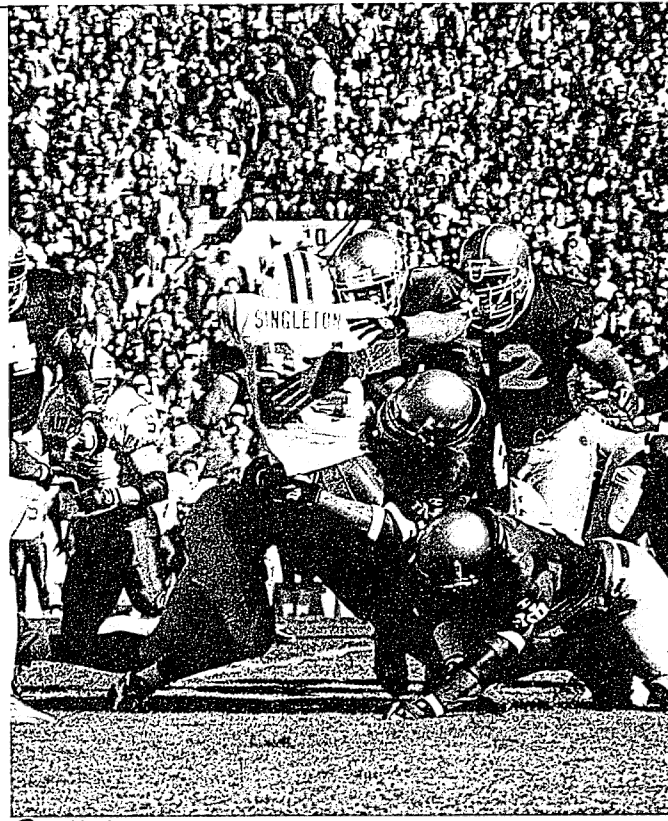
scrimmage. ... We tried to isolate them, we tried to zone them, we tried to T-block them. We tried everything."

Despite Air Force's inexplicable domination up front, the Irish grabbed a 17-10 lead early in the fourth quarter when Marc Edwards plunged one yard over right guard to cap an eight-play, 78-yard drive. But the Falcons showed no sign of quitting. They marched methodically to the Notre Dame 26-yard-line where, on a huge fourth-and-one play, Morgan pitched left to tailback Tobin Ruff, who sprinted untouched into the end zone.

In the extra session, the Irish had another chance to close out the pesky visitors, taking possession at the Air Force 25. But Ron Powlus fumbled on the first play when he was sacked by Falcon linebacker Joe Suhajda and teammate Alex Pupich recovered. Morgan would capitalize on the error. From the Irish 25, he used four short runs and a critical facemask penalty against Notre Dame to move the Falcons into chip-shot field goal range. Thompson did the rest, leaving the Irish faithful to ponder a New Year's without a bowl.

"I can't say enough about our players," said Air Force Head Coach Fisher DeBerry. "Both teams played hard. Our guys just never gave up. We emphasized to them that we were in here to win, not just to look good on national television. We really believed that anything was possible."

The loss spoiled a gutsy effort from Powlus, who compensated for the dormant



Stuffed. Air Force halfback Jamal Singleton is stopped cold by a host of Irish defenders.

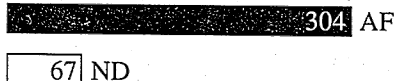
ground attack by completing 16 of 24 passes for 268 yards in the face of an Air Force rush that sacked him three times and pressured him continuously. The yardage was a season high for Powlus and the third highest of his college career. He also set a school record by connecting on 11 consecutive passes dating back to the end of the Washington game. But he also fumbled twice with the game on the line, including the critical miscue on the first play of overtime.

An extra session seemed like a remote possibility when, midway through the first quarter, Allen Rossum fielded a punt at his own 43, sprinted up the middle and cut down the right sideline to give the Irish a 7-0 cushion. The touchdown came on Rossum's second career punt return and completed an impressive quartet of scores for the speedy cornerback that also includes a 99-yard kickoff return against Purdue five weeks earlier, a 76-yard interception return to seal last year's win over Washington and a 98-yard blocked PAT return in the '95 Texas game.

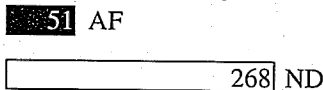
But the Falcons were not impressed by Rossum's resumé. On their next drive, they marched 66 yards in 10 plays and cut the deficit to four with a 21-yard Thompson field goal. It was a one-man effort as Morgan ran for 20 yards on a quarterback draw, threw to Marc Ranger for 10 on a rollout and

GAME at a GLANCE

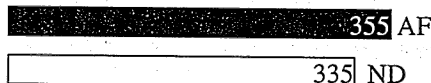
Rushing Yards



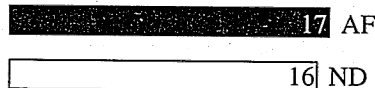
Passing Yards



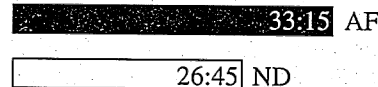
Total Yardage



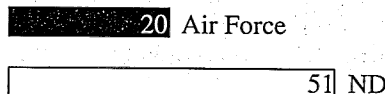
First Downs



Time of Possession



Penalties (Yards)



SCORING

Air Force	3	7	0	7	3	20
Notre Dame	7	3	0	7	0	17

1st Quarter

ND: Rossum 57 punt return at 7:59 (Sanson PAT)

AF: Thompson 21 FG at 3:09

2nd Quarter

AF: Morgan 5 run at 8:23 (Thompson PAT)

ND: Sanson 27 FG at 3:35

3rd Quarter

None

4th Quarter

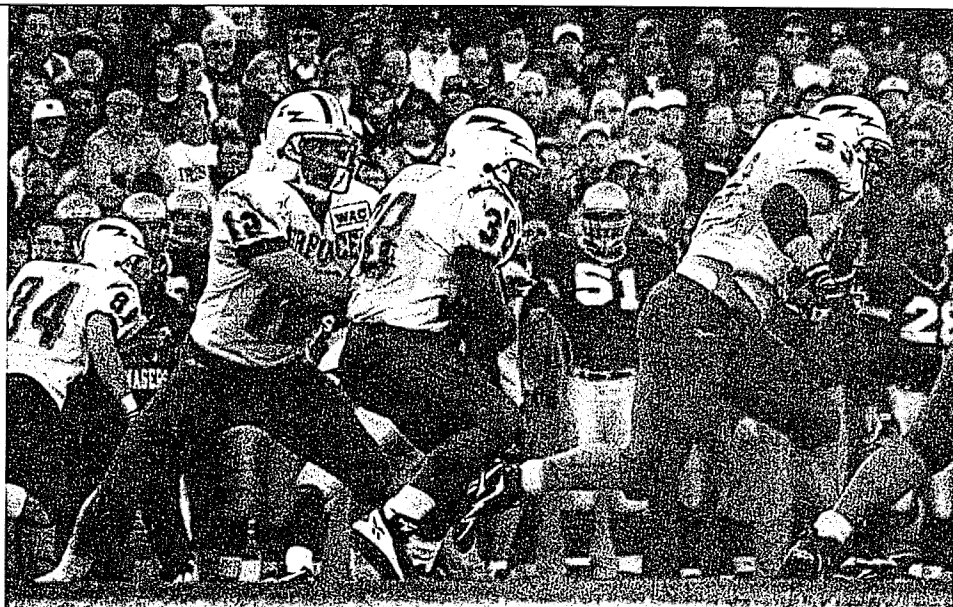
ND: Edwards 1 run at 12:09 (Sanson PAT)

AF: Ruff 26 run at 7:15 (Thomson PAT)

Overtime

AF: Thompson 27 FG

PREGAME AP RANKING: 8th



How does this work? Air Force quarterback Beau Morgan displays the option for the Irish. The senior playcaller burned Notre Dame for 183 yards rushing and one touchdown.

then optioned left for 33 more before the drive stalled inside the 5-yard line.

Morgan's heroics would continue on Air Force's next offensive series. Using nine straight running plays, he led the Falcons 74 yards to the go-ahead touchdown, which he scored from five yards out by dragging Lyrion Cobbins across the goal line. On the drive, Morgan had all but 13 of the team's yards. Not bad for a guy who stands just 5'10" and weighs 190 pounds.

"They read [our defense] ... and the quarterback ducked it up inside," Holtz said. "He is an excellent runner."

Now trailing 10-7, Powlus and the Irish responded. From his own 30, the senior quarterback tossed in the flat to Emmett Mosley, who eluded two potential tacklers for a 28-yard gain. After a holding penalty set up second-and-25, Powlus found Malcolm Johnson for 13 and Shannon Stephens across the middle for 18 to sustain the drive. The Falcons finally held on their own 9-yard line and Notre Dame had to settle for Jim Sanson's tying 27-yard boot.

The turning point in the game might have been just before halftime with the Irish again on the march. From the Air Force 13, Powlus hit a sliding Raki Nelson for an apparent touchdown, but the pass was ruled incomplete. Replays showed that the freshman did indeed cradle the ball before it touched the ground. It would be foolish to argue that the missed call affected the game's outcome — the Irish had plenty of chances to close out Air Force — but it certainly seemed to swing the momentum before the

break.

"A touchdown before halftime would have been real good if we got it," Holtz said. "I asked the official and he said the ball skipped. Raki Nelson told me he caught it and I thought he caught it."

In the third quarter, the teams did little but exchange punts as the Irish defense finally began to solve the wishbone. And when Edwards gave the hosts a seven-point fourth-quarter lead with his short touchdown, victory seemed to be in hand. But the Falcons roared back to score the game's final 10 points and leave Notre Dame's season in shambles.

"Air Force played their hearts out," Holtz said. "I thought we would play better than we did. It is very disappointing."

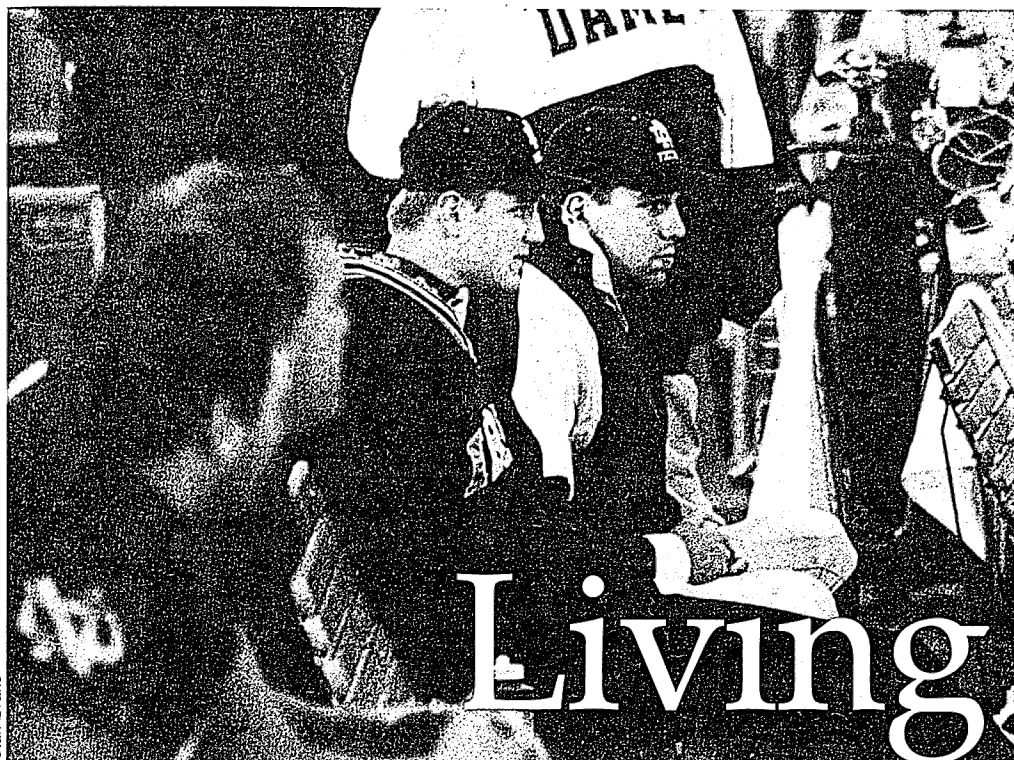
The visitors' locker room expressed the opposite sentiment.

"This is as good as it gets," Air Force linebacker Steve Fernandez said. "This feels about 500,000 times better than last week [their loss against Navy]."

For Holtz and the Irish, the feeling was painfully familiar. Another loss in the now not-so-intimidating Notre Dame Stadium. Another heartwrenching defeat by a last-second kick. Another early exit from the national championship race.

"We need to handle this with class," Holtz said. "Is it easy to take? No. We have no excuses. We have to come out to play."

Why bother, some thought. It was supposed to be different. It was supposed to be a return to past glory. Instead, after the loss to Air Force, it just seemed over. □



Stan Evans

GROWING PAINS. Injuries suffered by Tom Krug and Ron Powlus at Notre Dame have been widely publicized.

What started with high expectations has turned into four years of ups and downs — both on and off the field — for the Class of 1997

Living Up?

BY JAKE SCHALLER

You are a high school senior. You live in a small town and you are its hero. The quarterback of the football team, the golden boy — the all-American boy. There's probably one just like you in every small town across the country. But you're different. You are not only the all-American boy, you are *the* All-American. You are the number-one prospect coming out of high school. *USA Today* calls you the Offensive Player of the Year. *Parade* calls you the Player of the Year.

Every college football program in America dreams about landing you, saying that if you wear its uniform, you will break every single passing record that has been kept since the birth of the forward pass.

Instead of deciding to play for a team that would hand its offense over to you, however, you choose Notre Dame. You don't care about huge stats; you care about winning, because that's all you have known since you started playing football.

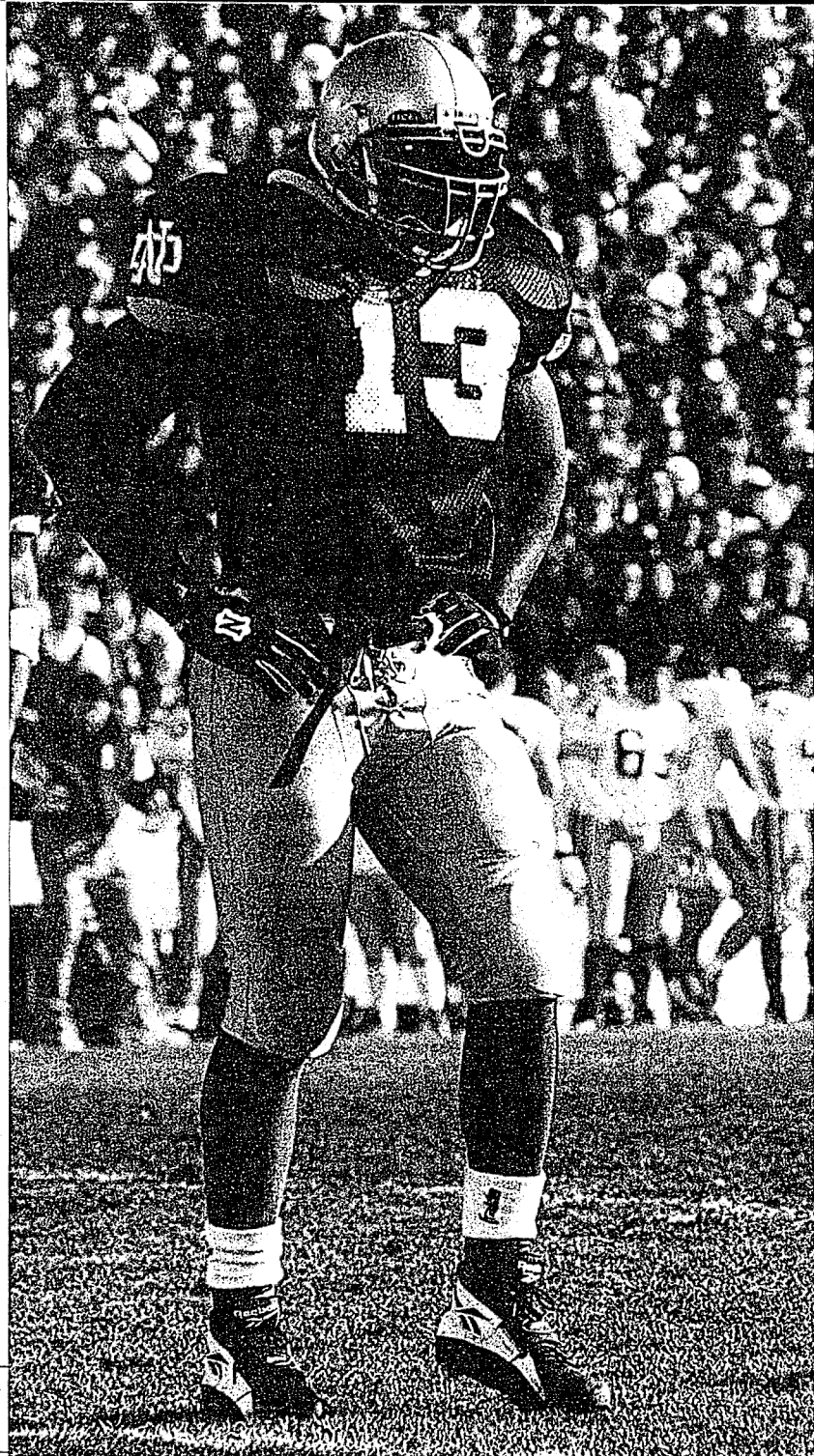
You head off to school and meet your new friends. Three of them were named to the *Parade* All-American team, four to the *USA Today* All-American team. Three are ranked among the nation's top-25 players.

People look at you and your friends and they nod their heads. Fans and coaches smile. Elder teammates get a sinking feeling that they may not see as much of the football field as they had expected. Opposing coaches think, "I have to deal with them for *four* years?"

Responsibility: it's an admirable trait in anyone. It takes time to cultivate — even more time to assign to another. Imagine that your father gives you the keys to his prize car and says, "Here son, it's yours. Take it for a while. I know you will treat it well."

Now imagine that not only your father is counting on you, but others as well — people you know well, people you know by face and millions of people whom you don't know at all. They are all counting on you. "Do us proud. Represent us well. Bring it back in better condition than we gave it to you."

Could you do it? *Would* you do it?



BRICK WALL. Bert Berry anchored a linebacking corps that consistently shut down opposing offenses. The native Texan led the team with 10 sacks.

It is an interesting question for Notre Dame football fans to ponder, especially with the Class of 1997 at the end of its college career. It's interesting because in certain respects, they were given the keys to the Notre Dame football program.

Arriving as rookies, they join a team that has just lost 11 starters, four of whom were chosen in the first round of the NFL Draft with two more going in the second round. On top of that, fullback Jerome Bettis and cornerback Tom Carter left after their junior years.

The future of the program seems to be placed squarely in the hands of this highly-touted class. And with this responsibility come expectations — national championships, personal awards, the beginning of something very special.

Unfortunately, things rarely go exactly as planned. Some things

happen for legitimate reasons, and others can be explained only by fate or bad luck. The Class of 1997 has had more than its share of both. This is what fate decides:

Six of the original 22 class members leave the team.

The head coach leaves because of neck surgery for part of their junior year and then in their senior year announces his resignation, effective at season's end.

Ron Powlus breaks his collarbone twice in his freshman season — once simply by throwing a football — leaving the potential starter on the sidelines for the entire year. He then breaks his left arm junior year, shelving him for the season.

Melvin Dansby hurts his neck and is lost for his entire junior campaign.

The seemingly iron-clad Marc Edwards hurts his knee in his senior year and is lost for the season.

Tom Krug is found to have a condition in his neck that forces him to hang up his cleats *forever*.

These twists of fate hurt the team, but there is nothing that could have been done about them.

"The way I've always viewed injuries, and I think a lot of people do, is that it's football," Powlus explains. "It's a violent sport and it's not easy and you get hit and you get hurt. I was the unfortunate victim of two injuries, but you know, that's the way it goes, and I think that's how this class has handled the injuries. A very realistic class."

They should be after four years of dose after dose of realism:

1993: A national championship is ruined by a heartbreaking, heartwrenching, heart-thrown-on-the-ground-and-stomped-on loss to Boston College at home.

1994: The Irish suffer through their worst season since the inaugural year of the Holtz era. They go 6-5-1, lose at home twice, to Boston College again and to Colorado in green jerseys at a Fiesta Bowl that most thought they should have been watching on television.

1995: The season ends before it even starts as the Irish are shocked by Northwestern in their home opener. The team then drops its big game of the year to Ohio State on three third-quarter turnovers and loses to Florida State in the Orange Bowl.

1996: Ohio State manhandles the Irish at home and, three weeks later, Air Force fans dance on the floor of the House that Rockne Built. The 13-year unbeaten streak against USC also falls to the wayside, sending the Irish home for New Year's for the first time in nine years.

But it doesn't end there. Off-the-field problems have also haunted the class during its stay. Before the first game of 1993, a damaging article about kicker Scott Bentley, a potential member of the class who went to Florida State, runs in *Sports Illustrated*. The Irish-bashing book *Under the Tarnished Dome* gains notoriety while the freshmen are still getting accustomed to college life. Randy Kinder and Robert Farmer have their share of troubles at Student Affairs and Kinder is suspended for the 1995 Orange Bowl.

Merely coincidence? Or is this class cursed?

Don't forget, of course, that these players wear the gold helmets that are simultaneously magnets for inflated praise and overly-harsh criticism. But don't cry for them too hard, because the players brought this on themselves. They all *chose* to play in the shadow of Touchdown Jesus and under a microscope.

"When you're playing every single game on national television and you're playing every single game in front of millions and

millions and millions of fans, it does put a little more pressure on you," Powlus says.

As for the on-field struggles, more than a few factors have contributed. Before the start of the 1994 season, the Irish suffered a devastating loss of talent. In the previous two years, they lost a combined 15 players to the NFL, a figure that would decimate most programs.

In addition, there were problems on the offensive line in '94 that kept Powlus under constant pressure. "I think the case a couple years ago with the line was that there was a lot of moving around," Powlus says. "There were a lot of position changes during the week and different people playing different positions. Probably one of the hardest things to do is change positions during the middle of the week."

The season ended in disarray, with Colorado thumping the Irish 41-24.

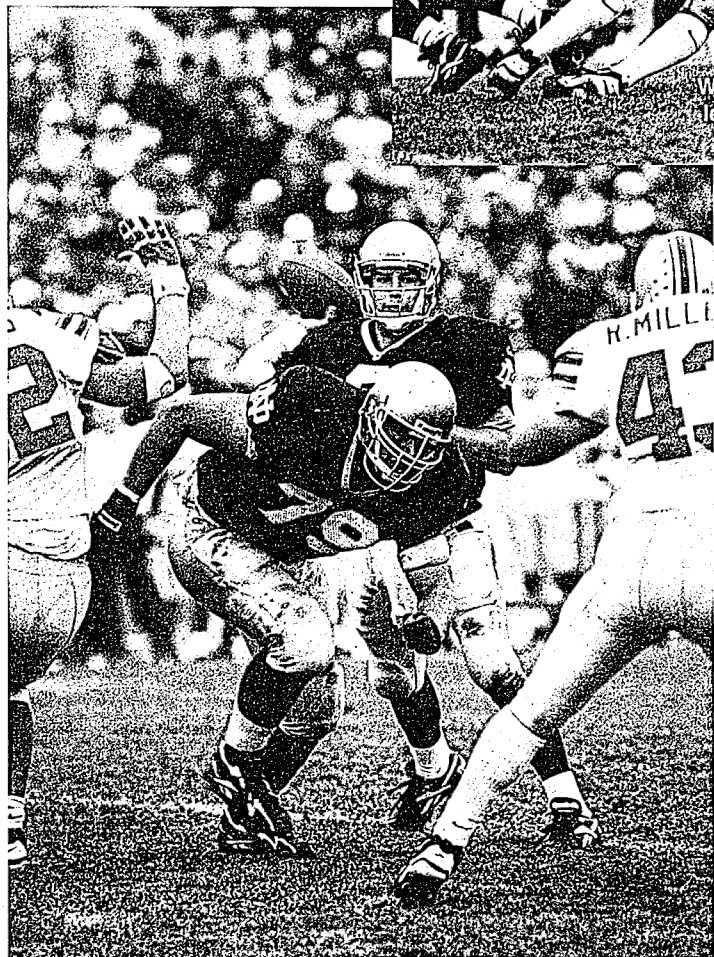
"That was probably the low point of this class's career," Powlus says. "Running off the Fiesta Bowl field and hearing the chants of '6-5-1,' I mean, that was tough. We just felt like we had let Notre Dame down."

Unfortunately for the squad, 1995 and 1996 have not lived up to expectations, either. Key upset losses at home have kept the Class of '97 from achieving its primary goals.

"I think it's probably made us stronger to have to deal with the expectations along with the adversity," Powlus says. "The expectations were high, but we all openly accepted them. We wanted to win a national championship, we wanted to be undefeated every year. So I think we accepted them without question, even while realizing that they were going to be very difficult to obtain."

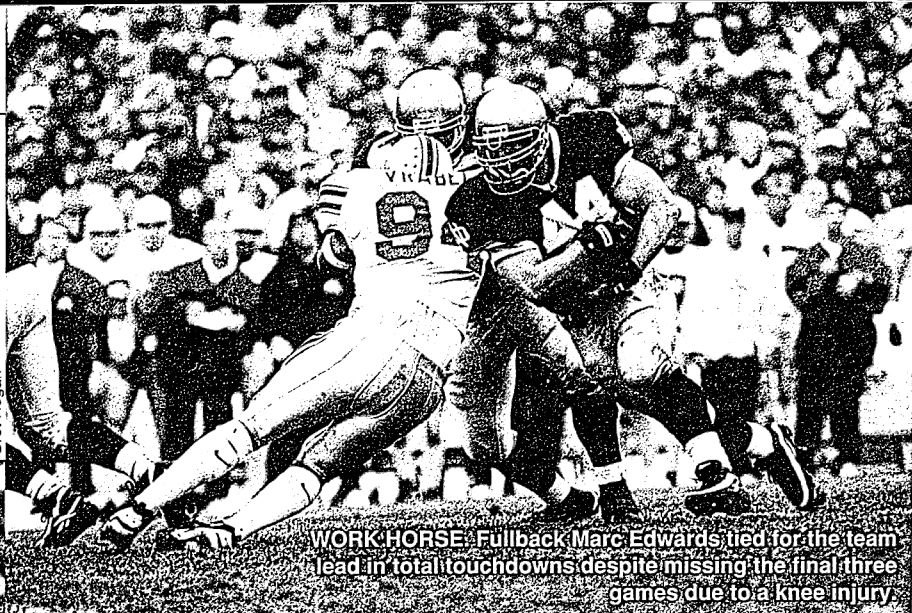
Linebacker Bert Berry also speaks of the disappointment of not securing a national championship ring, saying it is the one thing that will haunt his class.

"I think the one obvious thing we would have done over would be to put ourselves in the position to win the championship," he says. "And I think with the teams we've had, we could have done it on more than one occasion. But there are certain things that



FIELD GENERAL. Despite the pressures of being labeled the nation's best quarterback before he took a snap in college, Ron Powlus is already the Notre Dame career leader in touchdown passes. He will return next season to seek the only thing that has eluded him for four years: a national championship.

at home have kept the Class of '97 from



WORK HORSE. Fullback Marc Edwards tied for the team lead in total touchdowns despite missing the final three games due to a knee injury.

happen and you can't control them."

Of course, the Class of 1997 has succeeded individually. Powlus now holds the career mark for touchdown passes, Kinder ranks among the top career rushing leaders in Notre Dame history and Holtz and Berry say they'd be surprised if many of the seniors were not chosen on draft day.

But at Notre Dame, players are measured primarily by their team's performance, and, despite the setbacks, this team has stuck together. At the end of last season, Berry said that no one would leave early for the NFL draft. "We want to get things back to how we found them," he said at the time. Despite the rather embarrassing loss to Air Force this year, Berry believes that the class has succeeded in this endeavor.

"I think we did [get the program on track] to a certain extent," Berry says. "[The last few weeks we] started to get things going in the right direction. We've been pretty successful and pretty productive."

Powlus agrees. "We had a tough year a couple of years ago, and even last year things weren't always straight, but I think that our class is going out of here leaving a

program that is very strong."

Holtz also believes he is leaving a solid program. Much of this, he thinks, is because of the senior class, the captains and the leadership that they've provided.

"I think they've done a tremendous job and I think they've played very, very well," Holtz says. "They've played the best football of their careers, they've provided great leadership and they've been very positive, and yet they've been through a lot of turmoil."

The Class of 1997 will finish its four years at Notre Dame a combined 34-12-1. But no matter what expectations the group has failed to meet, Berry thinks he and his classmates have represented Notre Dame to the best of their abilities.

"There is definitely a standard to uphold and a feeling of responsibility here," Berry explains. "A lot of the pressure we feel is self-inflicted because [we] don't want to let the school down." □



Mike Bennett

Just Wynn baby. Renaldo Wynn celebrates his 24-yard fumble return for a third-quarter touchdown.

FAR AND AWAY *Navy*

BY
JIM
BLAUM

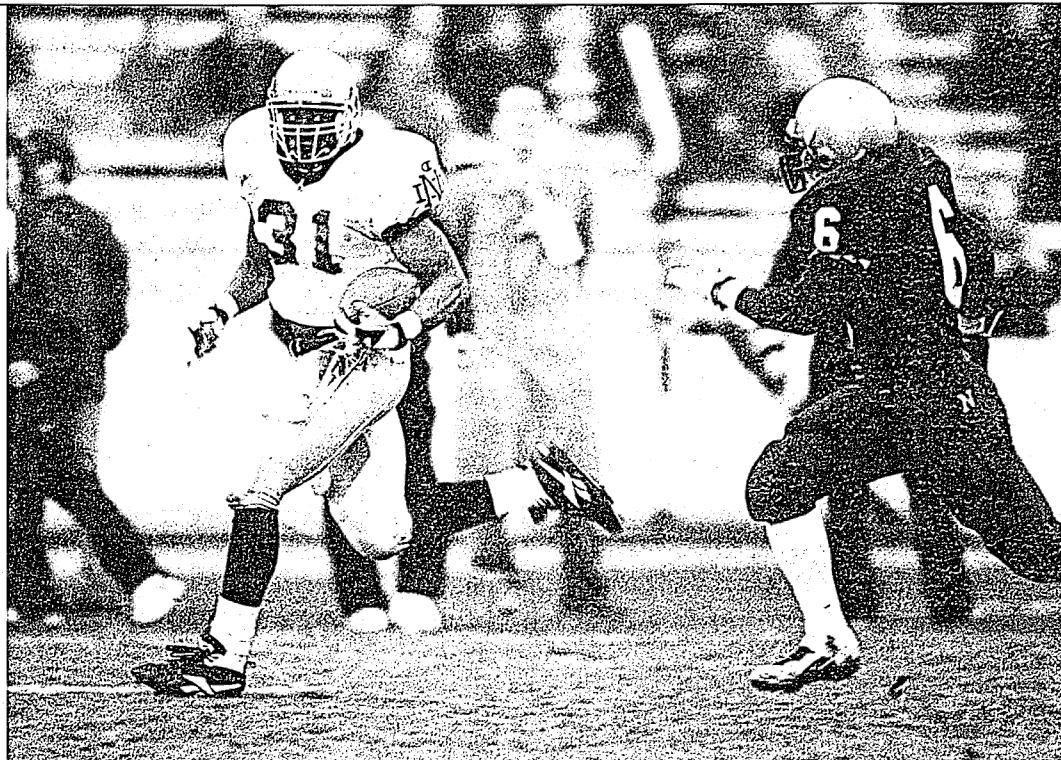
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wo weeks after suffering an unthinkable and heart-breaking overtime loss to Air Force at home, one might have expected the Irish to run away from Navy, which had defeated the Falcons. And run they did. The Irish ran all the way to Croke Park in Dublin, Ireland, and they kept on running over the Navy defense and into the NCAA record books.

Navy came into the game overflowing with momentum, hoping to drown a Notre Dame team that had just seen its national title hopes go down the drain. Sporting an impressive record of 5-1, the Midshipmen were off to their best start since 1979. Fresh off a 47-18 rout of Wake Forest, Navy entered its annual meeting with the Irish owning the third-best rushing offense in the nation and sporting the same wishbone attack that had baffled the Irish two weeks earlier. But, in a game touted as "The Shamrock Classic," it wouldn't be wise to bet against the Irish.

The matchup marked the 70th straight season these two teams have met. The Irish led the series 59-9-1 going in, and left with a 54-27 win, setting an NCAA record for the longest winning streak by one team over another.

The outcome, however, was just one of several similarities between this game and the one played last year at Notre Dame Stadium. Like 1995, the Irish entered the game with two defeats. Like 1995, they had nothing to play for but respect and a trip to



Eyeing the defense. Robert Farmer runs for some of his 74 yards.

a major bowl game. And like 1995, the Irish tasted victory, but this time they did it their way, Holtz's way.

Last year, the Midshipmen slammed quarterback Ron Powlus to a season-ending in-

jury and held the Irish at bay until the third quarter, when backup quarterback Tom Krug threw two touchdown passes to Derrick Mayes, giving Notre Dame a 35-17 victory. In that game, the Irish threw for about the

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Game at a Glance

Rushing Yards

303 ND

184 Navy

Passing Yards

91 ND

218 Navy

Total Yardage

394 ND

402 Navy

First Downs

16 ND

18 Navy

Time of Possession

25:45 ND

34:15 Navy

Penalties (Yards)

34 ND

45 Navy

SCORING

Notre Dame	7	14	14	19	54
Navy	0	7	14	6	27

1st Quarter

ND: Edwards 5 run at 4:40 (Sanson PAT)

2nd Quarter

ND: Chryplewicz 5 pass from Powlus at 14:53 (Sanson PAT)

N: Nelson 6 run at 3:19 (Vanderhorst PAT)

ND: Denson 33 run at :14 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

ND: Wynn 24 fumble return at 11:48 (Sanson PAT)

N: Nelson 1 run at 5:55 (Vanderhorst PAT)

ND: Denson 23 run at 2:25 (Sanson PAT)

N: Schemm 55 pass from Fay at :16 (Vanderhorst PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Edwards 1 run at 12:56 (Sanson PAT failed)

ND: Edwards 1 run at 6:41 (run failed)

ND: Spencer 2 run at 2:19 (Palumbo PAT)

N: Schemm 16 pass from Fay at :05 (pass failed)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 11th

same number of yards they ran for. That's not Lou Holtz football. But this year things were different.

In the week leading up to the showdown in Dublin, Holtz had announced that senior tailback Randy Kinder would start in place of sophomore Autry Denson, who had failed to impress the coach with his 14-carry, 46-yard performance against Air Force. "I just don't think we have the best chance to win right now with Autry Denson at tailback," Holtz said.

So Kinder entered the lineup, ran for just eight yards on three carries and ran right back to the sideline. After failing to achieve a first down on the opening series, Holtz replaced Kinder with, who else, Denson. Some say Holtz should have started Denson, who had accounted for 112 of Notre Dame's 165 yards rushing last year against Navy. Others believe it was simply Holtz's strategy. "What he did was try to put pressure on Autry and make Autry respond in the game, and he did," Powlus said after the game.

Denson carried 16 times for 123 yards, including a 33-yard touchdown scamper just before halftime, which made the score 21-7 and sank the Midshipmen.

"You have to be prepared for the unexpected," Denson said. "During games,

Coach Holtz usually goes to the hot back, and fortunately today I was the hot back."

Holtz chose the right backs all day, as the Irish rushed for 303 yards and six touchdowns. Denson added a 23-yard score to accompany his 33-yarder before halftime. Starting fullback Marc Edwards found the end zone three times to go along with 47 yards rushing, and his backup, Jamie Spencer, added a 2-yard score.

"Our offensive line did outstanding things. And our backs were running over people all

day," said Powlus, who completed six of 11 passes with one touchdown to tight end Pete Chryplewicz and no interceptions.

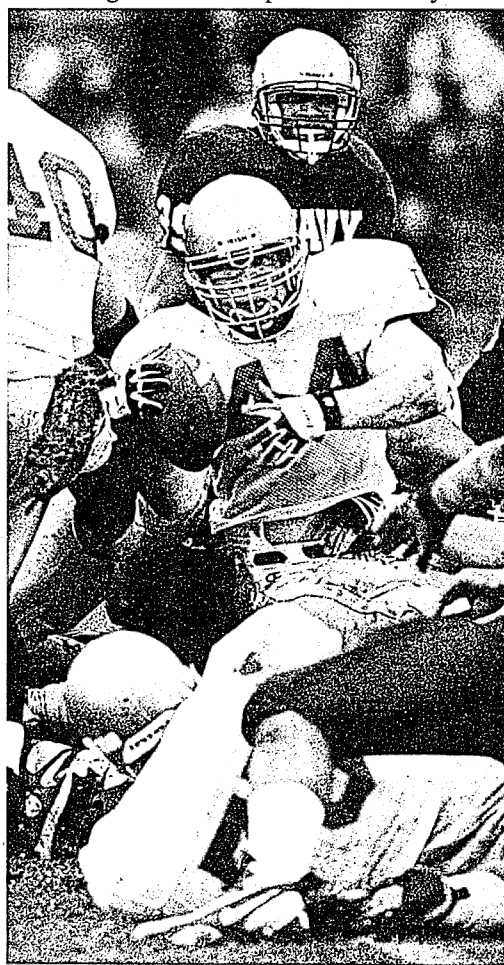
Just as the Notre Dame backs trampled over the Navy defense, the Irish defense ran ashore the option attack of the Midshipmen. The unit did all that was necessary to give Notre Dame an opportunity to win the game, including making the big plays. Bob Davie's troops forced three Navy turnovers: one interception and two fumbles, one of which was returned for a touchdown.

On Navy's sixth play of the second half, quarterback Chris McCoy dropped back to pass. As McCoy looked downfield, sopho-

more outside linebacker Kory Minor came from his blind side and patted him, jarring the ball loose. Renaldo Wynn scooped it up and rambled untouched for 24 yards and six points. Wynn's return gave the Irish a comfortable 28-7 lead. Navy cut the Irish lead to 14 points by the end of the third quarter with a 55-yard pass from backup quarterback Ben Fay to Cory Schemm, making the score 35-21. But that was as close as Navy would get.

After the dust left by the Irish running backs settled on the for-

eign soil of Croke Park, the scoreboard showed a decisive Notre Dame victory. Holtz and the Irish had found their stride, continuing their dominance of Navy. Redemption came to an Irish team that appeared on the brink of utter collapse. "This has been a wonderful experience," Holtz said. "I've asked the players to write a journal about what they experienced, to keep and think about in years to come." Maybe they will remember how their luck returned on the Emerald Isle. □



Taking the Plunge. Marc Edwards battles for one of his three touchdowns in the game.

Mike Bennett

Anatomy of a Road Trip



courtesy of Matt Mammi

BY JEREMY DIXON

It all starts when my friend (I'll call him Tom, since that's his name) walks into my apartment with a proposal. "Let's go to Boston," he says. That sounds great, because I was already planning on going. But I think too soon because he then finishes his sentence, "... in a motor home!" For some reason, I think this is a brilliant idea, and we recruit five other friends. Now that we've returned, "brilliant" isn't be the first word I'd choose.

Thursday: The ride out is no problem, with all of us taking turns driving. The RV has Alaska plates, so everyone keeps asking us if we like the weather. We tell them it's a lot warmer than where we came from (sure, it is). We almost burn the RV down when we try to cook a pizza in the oven. A tip for everyone: remove the cardboard from the pizza before you cook it. My friend Matt decides to push the RV's mileage and nearly runs out of gas somewhere near Syracuse. Luckily, we coast into a gas station two miles down the road.

Friday, 8:00 a.m.: We finally roll into Boston. Our next mission is to find out where the hell BC is. My friend Mark has to decide between running over some kids on their way to school or hitting a stop sign — he opts for the stop sign. We find a parking lot five minutes from the stadium, right across from a Ground Round restaurant. If you've never heard of Ground Round, don't worry. It's not worth it.

4:00 p.m.: We get a tour of Boston from one of Tom's friends. We then go to a party that night and talk to some of our Notre Dame friends who also made the trip out. They think the RV is a great idea; after making the drive out, I think flying would have been.

Saturday: We go to the game; I'll spare you the boring details. We want to get an early start on Sunday morning because I have a test, Matt has a paper due and Paul has to drive back to IU. We discover, though, that staying out until 4:30 a.m. playing Jenga and drinking other people's alcohol makes one prone to sleeping in. We finally leave at 10:30. This is when the excitement really starts.

Sunday, 11:30 a.m.: We stop at my friend Dan's house in Worcester, Mass., to visit his folks. In his excitement to get home, Dan runs over a curb. When we get out, we notice a huge gash in the tire. I

What could go wrong with seven guys, an RV and some snow? Plenty

don't know about you, but none of us has any idea how to change a tire on a motor home. Apparently, none of the mechanics we call knows either. Or else they're not going to come out on a Sunday to change it. I guess the Patriots game is too exciting.

3:30 p.m.: Mike the cheerful mechanic shows up at the house. He wastes no time reminding us how grateful we should be because he has six other tires to fix. When we thank him, he says, "Yeah, that's what they all say." Then he says he can't believe seven guys couldn't change a tire; we tell him we're all Arts and Letters majors.

8:00 p.m.: By this time, we realize that our new ETA is around 7 or 8 a.m. Monday. I figure I can sleep the last few legs of the trip so when I get home I can study again. The test is at 1:30. But in the meantime, *Platoon* is in our VCR, so I take a study break.

Monday, 12:00 a.m.: To add to our excitement, we run into snow.

1:00 a.m.: It's still snowing; in fact, it's worse. Little do we know that we have entered the Snow Belt, a place where the weather makes South Bend appear normal, a place where lake-effect snow is common. If you ever go there, be afraid — be very afraid.

3:00 a.m.: We pull off the interstate outside of Erie, Penn., to check the weather with the night clerk at a Super 8. The future meteorologist tells us, "It's snowing — it may stop or continue." After these words of wisdom, we decide to keep going. We can only go about 30 mph and it doesn't help that I can't see the road. The tire's still holding up — that Mike sure did a good job. One bad thing, though: the ceiling in the cab is falling apart. It's like we have a convertible with a blizzard in the front seat.

5:00 a.m.: We decide to pull off the road east of Cleveland. We aren't alone — the "Point Break People" are there as well. Apparently, these guys ride around looking for blizzards so they can snowmobile. It's a demented spin on *Twister*. Anyway, they utter such profound statements as, "This is awesome, man," and "Welcome to the Snow Belt, dudes." Yeah, thanks.

10:00 a.m.: We make some phone calls to let everyone know we're all right. I call the people who rented us the RV. They tell us to take our time; their RV is worth a lot. I also call my professor to tell him where I am. He sympathizes and tells me I can make up the test.

1:30 p.m.: We're still in Ohio as my classmates start the test. To pass the time, we start making bets as to when we'll get home. My guess is 6:15; some say Tuesday. Another fun bet is to guess what calamity will strike us next. While my friend Sean puts his money on the plague, I think a flood is forthcoming. We decide not to go to USC because California would probably float away.

5:30 p.m.: We pull into Mishawaka to empty the sewer tanks at a campground. Thirty-one hours after leaving Boston, we pull into College Park. It's a bittersweet moment as we lock up the RV, but we decide to have a reunion at Coach's later that evening to make up for being stuck in a camper.

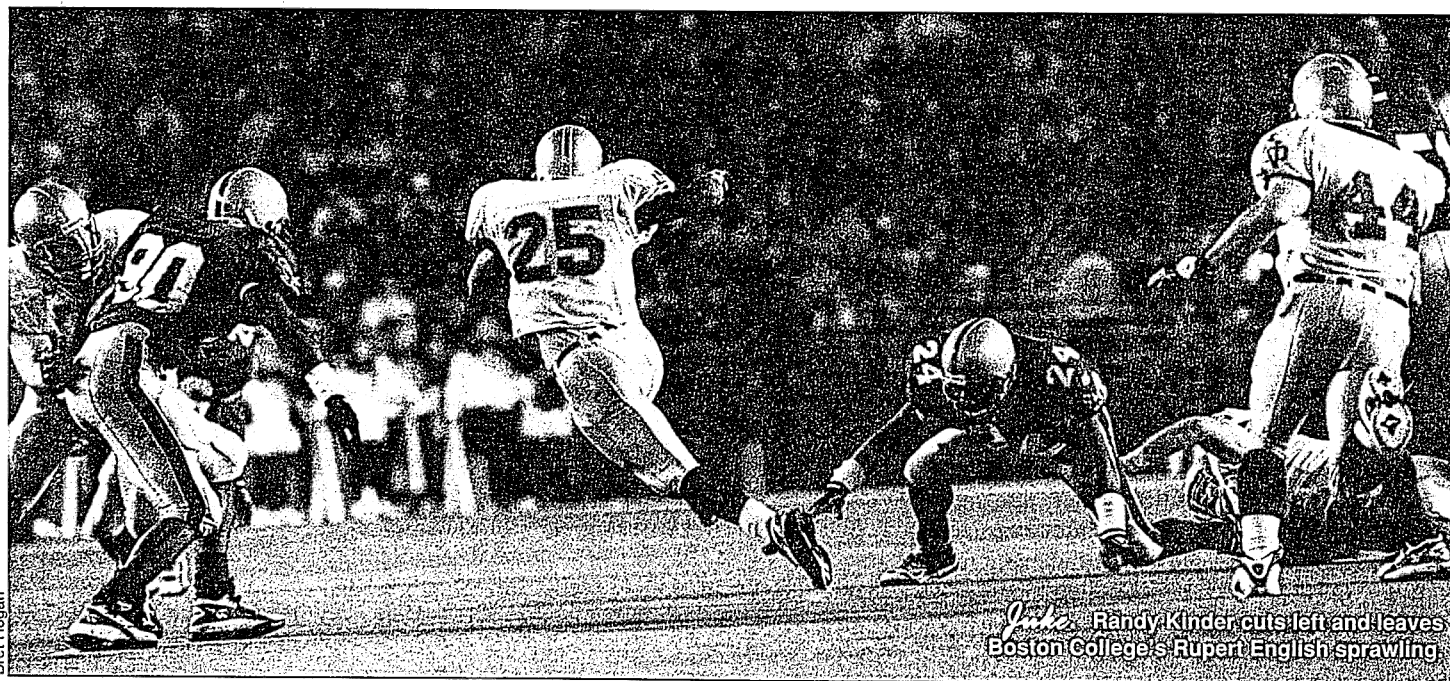
I don't write this to discourage any would-be roadtrippers. It was definitely a good time, although I don't know how those crazy *Road Rules* people do it. The trip ended my dream of being on the MTV show after graduation — four days in an RV is plenty for me. □

F

or Boston College, the annual matchup with Notre Dame is The Game. None other comes close in preparation or anticipation. This year, banners hung all around the BC campus touting the continuation of "The Holy War." Although Irish fans may scoff, they shouldn't forget that the series between the teams has been split over the past four years. The Notre Dame faithful still seek revenge for the shocking upset in 1993 and the trouncing the following year in Boston. This year, however, an off-the-field scandal was the main topic of conversation on the Chestnut Hill campus.

T H E B E S T B E T *Boston College*

BY
JEREMY
DIXON



Julie Randy Kinder cuts left and leaves Boston College's Rupert English sprawling.



Boston massacre. As the sun set over Alumni Stadium, so too did the hopes of a BC upset as the Irish scored 27 unanswered points in the second half.

Bret Hogan

The suspension of 13 Eagle players because of allegations of illegal sports betting had sent Boston into a tailspin. Nobody knew if the Eagles would show up ready to play or if they would allow the scandal to deflate their enthusiasm for the game.

In the end, the Irish won handily, 48-21 (yes, they covered the spread), and the Ireland Trophy remained at Notre Dame for another year. But not before Boston College gave the Irish quite a scare.

Fears of an upset were not unfounded, either. After all, this was the day that Purdue beat Michigan, Memphis defeated Tennessee and Vanderbilt nearly upset top-ranked Florida. So when the score was knotted at 21 early in the third quarter, Irish fans could be forgiven for being squeamish.

A day that began with rain and bad weather turned into clear skies by kickoff. Weather forecasters had predicted "tropical-type storms" for the game, a forecast that thankfully was wrong. But gusts of up to 40 mph affected the kicking game, and the wet field caused several players to slip.

The first half was very sloppy for Notre Dame. Fullback Marc Edwards fumbled while leaping into the end zone early in the second quarter, a score that would have given the Irish a comfortable lead. What appeared to be just another turnover became something much worse, however. Edwards tore the medial collateral ligament of his left

knee on the play and would be sidelined for the rest of the year. The Eagles then hosted a clinic on how to run the draw as they marched 80 yards in just under two minutes to take a 10-7 lead.

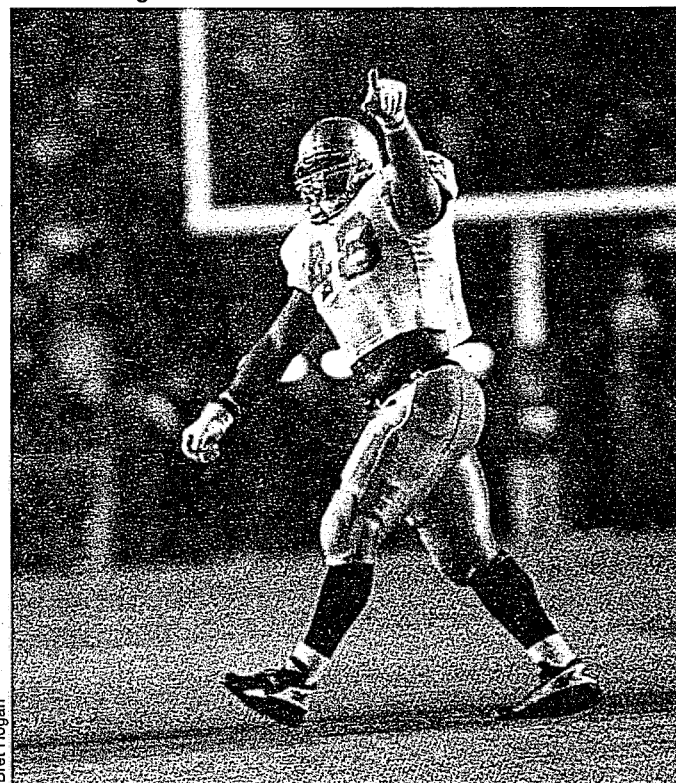
The Irish turned to sophomore Jamie Spencer to fill the void left by Edwards, and he was up to the task. Both Spencer and classmate Autry Denson took advantage of holes opened by the offensive line to score touchdowns in the second quarter, giving Notre Dame a 21-10 lead going into the locker room, despite three turnovers.

Boston College Head Coach Dan Henning must have given a rousing halftime speech because the Eagles came out firing on all cylinders in the second half. After the Irish kickoff, quarterback Matt Hasselbeck connected on his first three passes before the Irish defense buckled down, forcing a 41-yard John Matich field goal.

On the first play after the ensuing kickoff, Denson ran up the middle, only to forget the ball at the line of scrimmage. Boston College recov-

ered at the Irish 33. Omari Walker was the workhorse for BC as he consistently blew past the Irish front seven. The defense couldn't seem to solve the draw play, and Walker ran it to perfection, scoring from 15 yards out. After a two-point conversion, the game was tied at 21.

We're number one. Renaldo Wynn points to the crowd during the second-half rout.



Bret Hogan

Game at a Glance

Rushing Yards

426 ND

129 Boston College

Passing Yards

118 ND

192 Boston College

Total Yardage

544 ND

235 Boston College

First Downs

24 ND

24 Boston College

Time of Possession

34:05 ND

25:55 Boston College

Penalties (Yards)

116 ND

24 Boston College

SCORING

Notre Dame	7	14	14	13	48
Boston College	3	7	11	0	21

1st Quarter

ND: Edwards 8 run at 8:36 (Sanson PAT)

BC: Matich 48 FG at 5:45

2nd Quarter

BC: Walker 7 run at 11:35 (Matich PAT)

ND: Spencer 1 run at 4:13 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Denson 4 run at 2:17 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

BC: Matich 41 FG at 12:27

BC: Walker 15 run at 10:47 (DiCosmo pass from Hasselbeck)

ND: Farmer 81 run at 6:20 (Sanson PAT)

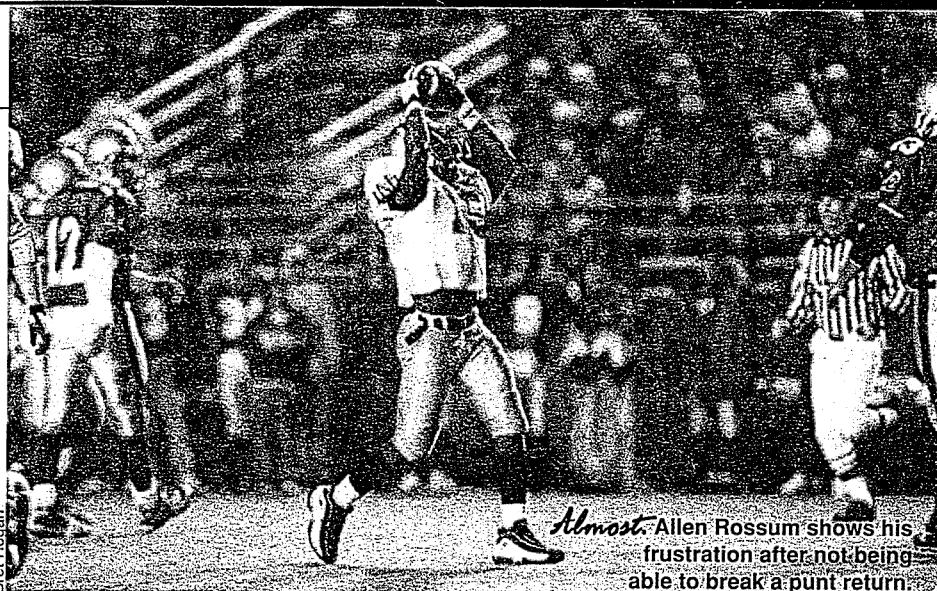
ND: Farmer 11 run at 4:05 (Sanson PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Maiden 20 fumble return at 11:02 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Kinder 1 run at 5:52 (Palumbo PAT failed)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 11th



Bret Hogan

Almost. Allen Rossum shows his frustration after not being able to break a punt return.

But this was where the BC victory bus ran out of gas. Tailback Robert Farmer took advantage of his second run from scrimmage to outspurt the Boston College defense for an 81-yard touchdown. It marked the longest run by an Irish back since Eric Penick's 85-yard touchdown against USC in 1973.

"Today I just got an opportunity to help the team," Farmer said. "The offensive line blocked very well, and whenever we're called upon, we just try to make positive yards and get first downs."

"Our backs ran well, and obviously our line blocked well," Holtz said. "We didn't try to throw the ball much, but we're glad to get out of here with a win. This is not an easy place to play by any stretch of the imagination."

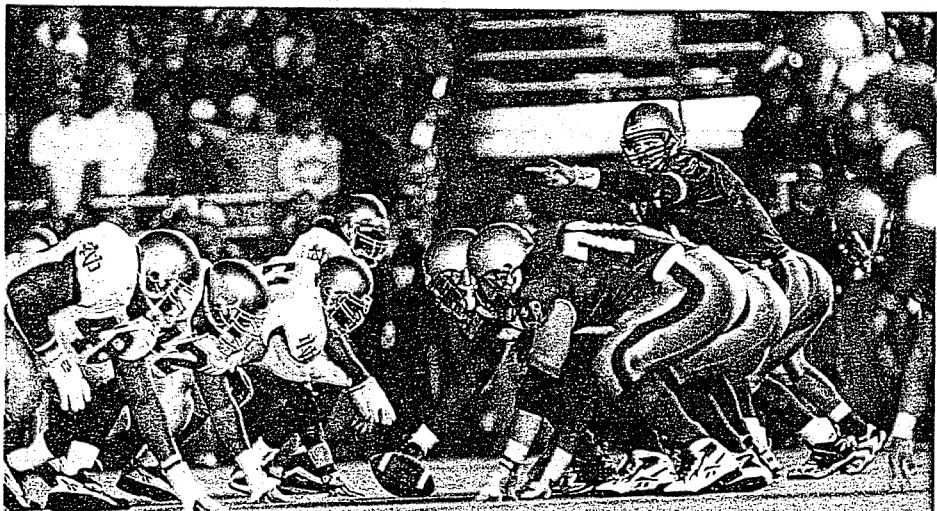
The next Irish possession was more of the same. Running down the throat of the Eagle defense, Notre Dame needed just three plays to find paydirt. Again it was Farmer, who went 11 yards this time for the score. In just over two minutes, the game

went from a tied struggle to a comfortable Irish lead.

The defense also rose to the occasion, forcing five Boston College turnovers and compiling four sacks. In the fourth quarter, nose tackle Alton Maiden picked up a Hasselbeck fumble and went rumbling, bumbling, stumbling into the end zone for another score. Melvin Dansby led the way with seven tackles and one-and-a-half sacks.

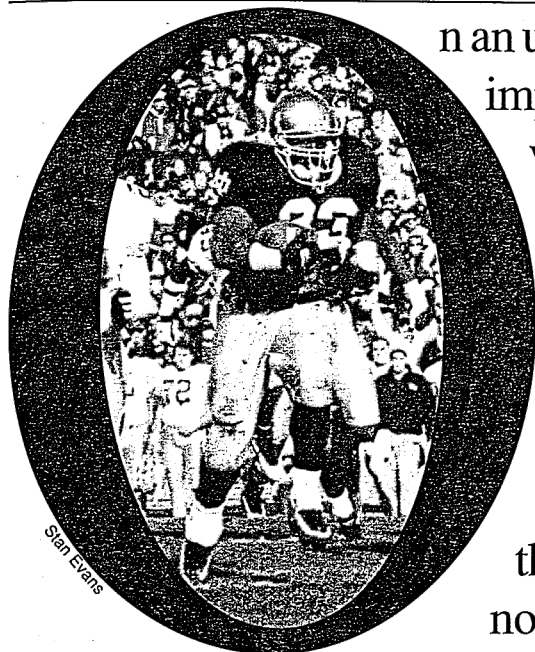
The Irish piled up the yardage, especially in the second half, finishing with a whopping 426 yards rushing. Denson led the way with 155 yards and Farmer added 98.

The Irish certainly made it look easy in their fourth-quarter runaway. They were able to put the gambling controversy aside and exorcise the ghosts of 1993 and 1994. And they continued their late-season dominance of inferior opponents that began with the Navy game. Holtz and his troops were able to invade Alumni Stadium and win for the first time ever. It was a satisfying victory for Notre Dame, one it would have been wise to bet the farm on. □



Bret Hogan

No, go the other way. Eagles quarterback Matt Hasselbeck calls an audible against an imposing Irish front that did not allow a score in the final 25 minutes of the game.



n an unseasonably warm November day in South Bend, impending storm clouds were swirling. These clouds were not in the atmosphere, however. They were surrounding Lou Holtz. Two days before the game, ESPN reported that Holtz would announce his resignation the following week. The national media took its cue and set up camp at Notre Dame. Soon all the major networks confirmed the story, prompting NBC's John Dockery to make the pregame announcement that "Lou Holtz will not be coaching the Irish next year."

MANY HAPPY RETURNS *Pittsburgh*

BY
JEREMY
DIXON

But Holtz and the administration side-stepped questions both before and after the game. When asked if he would be at Notre Dame next season, Holtz said, "I don't know. I'm not a fortune teller." Athletic Director Mike Wadsworth and Executive Vice-President William Beauchamp also refused to speculate, saying the decision was Holtz's to make.

How the team would react to the rumors and allegations surrounding its leader became of prime importance once the game began. And from the first quarter alone, Irish fans suspected that the hearts of the players were not in the game. Pitt came out and moved the ball to the Irish 36 before consecutive sacks by Kory Minor and Lyrion Cobbins forced a Panther punt. It was not until the second Irish offensive drive that they moved the ball, which they did in the same manner as they had the previous week against Boston College — they ran the ball down the defense's throat. But as the first

quarter ended, the game remained scoreless.

With the start of the second quarter, though, the floodgates opened. The Irish racked up 40 points before the half on their way to a 60-6 cakewalk over the Panthers. After Pitt stopped the Irish on a fake field-goal attempt, it was unable to move the ball. Enter Allen Rossum. Fielding a punt at his own 45, he burst through the middle and beat Curtis McGhee down the sideline for a touchdown. Suddenly the Irish were winning and the crowd was jubilant. But that was just the beginning.

It took a mere four plays on their next possession for the Irish to find the end zone again, sparked by a career-long 32-yard reception by tight end Pete Chryplewicz. Sophomore Jamie Spencer took advantage of his first career start to outrun the Pitt defense, rambling 40 yards for the score.

Trying to outdo itself, the offense produced more of the same after another Pitt

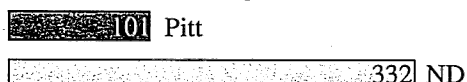
punt. This time, however, it took five plays to score. The key play on the drive was a 37-yard pass from Ron Powlus to Shannon Stephens, which moved the Irish to the Pitt 15. Two plays later, Robert Farmer found the promised land. After a failed two-point conversion, Notre Dame was up 19-0.

From the first Rossum return, Pitt should have learned not to kick it in his direction again. But Nate Cochran lofted it to the speedy junior following another ineffective drive. Rossum took it at the Irish 17 and blasted up the middle before cutting to the Notre Dame sideline, leaving the Panthers's punt-return team in his dust.

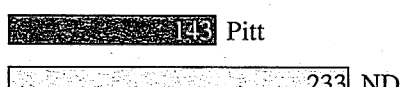
Rossum also left shattered Irish records in his dust. His four kick returns (he also scored against Purdue and Air Force) set a single-season record, breaking the record shared by "Rocket" Ismail (1989), Tim Brown (1987) and Nick Rassas (1965). He also tied the school record for most returns in a game, which he now shares with Brown

Game Glance

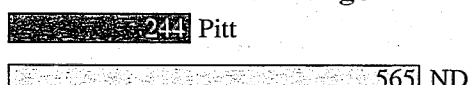
Rushing Yards



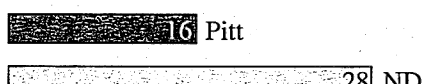
Passing Yards



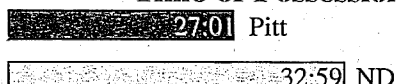
Total Yardage



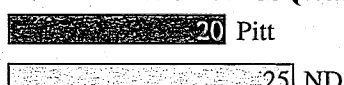
First Downs



Time of Possession



Penalties (Yards)



SCORING

Pitt	0	0	0	6	6
Notre Dame	0	40	13	7	60

1st Quarter

None

2nd Quarter

ND: Rossum 55 punt return at 12:42 (Sansom PAT)

ND: Spencer 40 run at 9:35 (Sansom PAT failed)

ND: Farmer 1 run at 6:31 (run failed)

ND: Rossum 83 punt return at 5:30 (Sansom PAT)

ND: Denson 74 punt return at 4:13 (Sansom PAT)

ND: Kinder 2 run at 1:31 (Palumbo PAT)

3rd Quarter

ND: Goodspeed 22 pass from Jackson at 12:17 (McCarthy PAT)

ND: Farmer 16 run at 1:28 (McCarthy PAT failed)

4th Quarter

PU: Hoffart 32 pass from Gonzalez at 14:53 (pass failed)

ND: Carretta 2 run at 3:18 (McDonnell PAT)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 14th

and Vince McNally, who did it in 1926.

"Their punt returns were superb and our coverage was subpar," Pitt Head Coach Johnny Majors said. "Their speed really killed us today."

But Notre Dame was not done scoring. On its next possession, Pitt was forced to punt again. This time Autry Denson was deep for the Irish. Fielding the ball at his own 26, he broke through a mass of would-be tacklers and cut left, racing down the sidelines for *another* punt return. By now, the crowd probably expected touchdowns off punt returns.

"Rossum had just come off of defense, so he gave me the chance to run one back," Denson said. "I was confident from the first run that if I got another chance I could break one."

"When the score is 0-0, a lot of teams have confidence," Pitt quarterback Matt Lytle said. "But when you're down by two, three, four touchdowns, that confidence fades away."

Unfortunately for Pitt, the Irish still had gas in their engine. On the first play from scrimmage, Lytle threw into double coverage and was intercepted by Irish safety Benny Guilbeaux. Five plays later, Powlus found Bobby Brown wide open down the right sideline. Brown stepped out at the 2, setting up Randy Kinder for the final score of the half.

The offensive display sent Notre Dame statisticians scrambling for their record books. The 40 points marked the most ever scored in a second quarter and second-most

in any quarter behind only the 42 points scored against St. Viator in 1912. The 231 punt-return yards broke the game record set against Beloit in 1926. The Irish also broke the single-season record for punt returns for touchdowns, as Denson's was the fourth of the season.

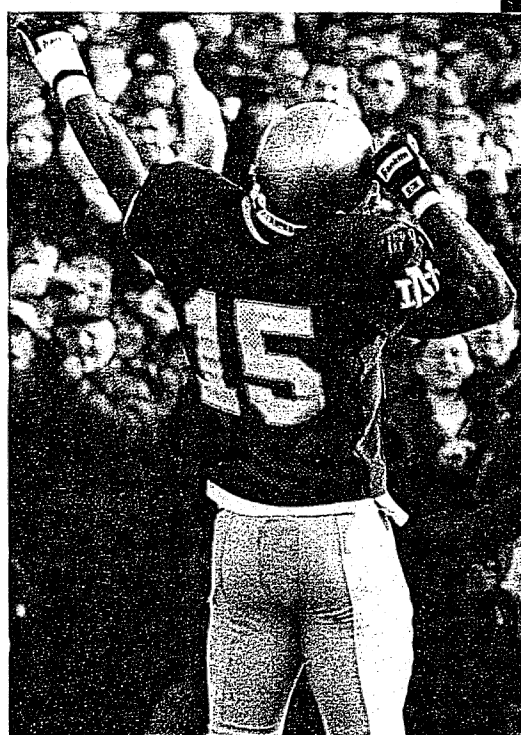
Fortunately for the Panthers, the Irish decided to play their reserves in the second half. Jarious Jackson entered and completed four of seven passes with one touchdown. Freshman Joey Goodspeed and senior Kevin Carretta also found paydirt for their first career touchdowns.

The Irish pounded Pitt on a day when off-the-field distractions could have doomed them. The 60 points were the most posted by the Irish since 1986, Lou Holtz's first year. At the end of the game, no one in the stands was sure what the coach would do next year, but three days later everyone would know that this would be his last season on the Irish sidelines. □



Bret Hogan

Strike a Pose. Allen Rossum and Autry Denson celebrate after their consecutive punt returns for touchdowns.



Bret Hogan

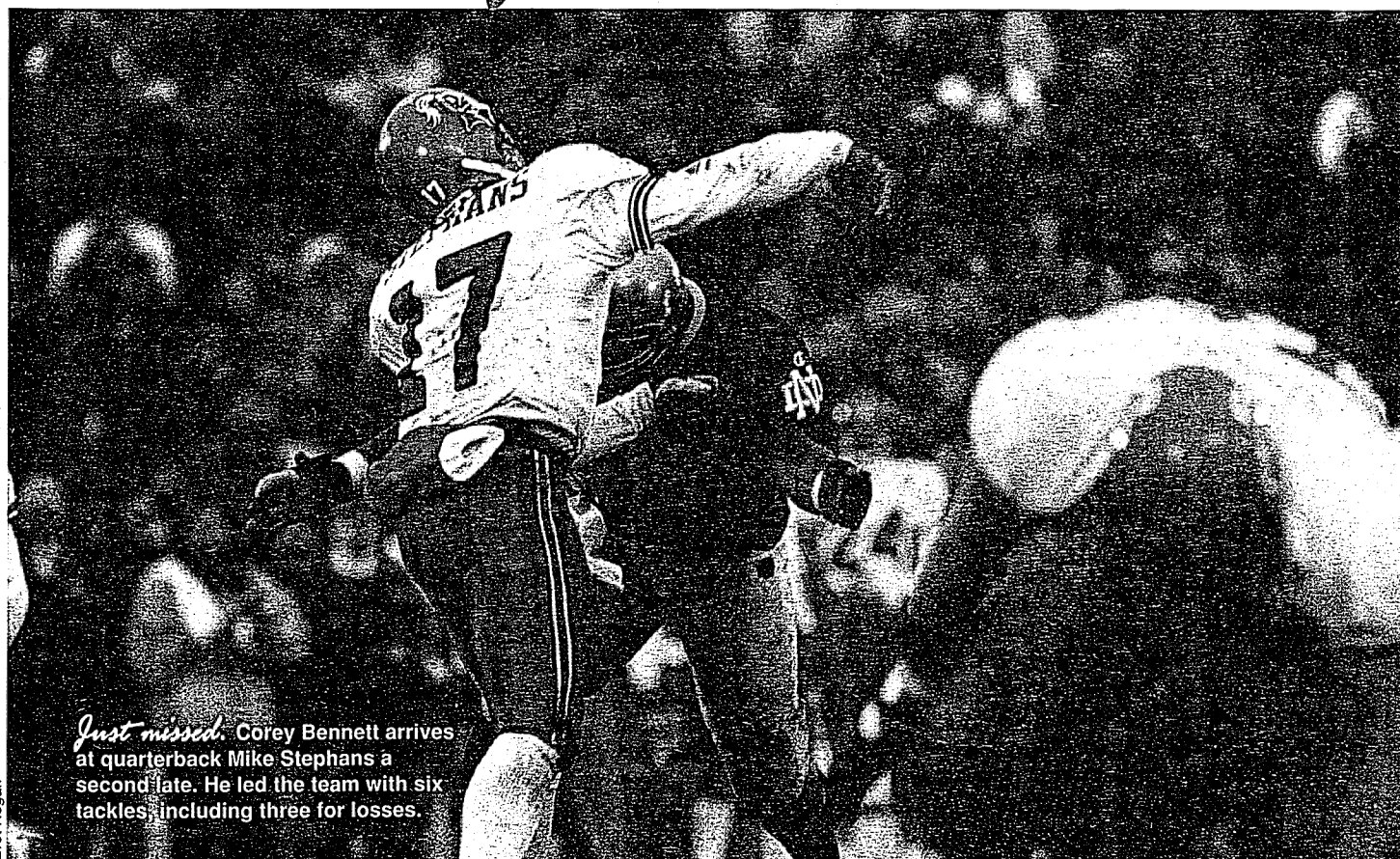
After an emotional and historic victory over Rutgers, which marked the end of an era at Notre Dame, Lou Holtz had little left to say. "Today I went into the game with one thought: gratitude," he said.

"Gratitude for the people, the students, but especially the coaches and players. I'm just left with thankfulness."

If only the regular season could have ended at this moment. It was, after all, the perfect game, complete domination in every respect. A testament to Holtz and to the character of the teams he has coached at Notre Dame.

THE LAST HURRAH *Rutgers*

BY
PETER
BERGIN



Just missed. Corey Bennett arrives at quarterback Mike Stephens a second late. He led the team with six tackles, including three for losses.

Bret Hogan

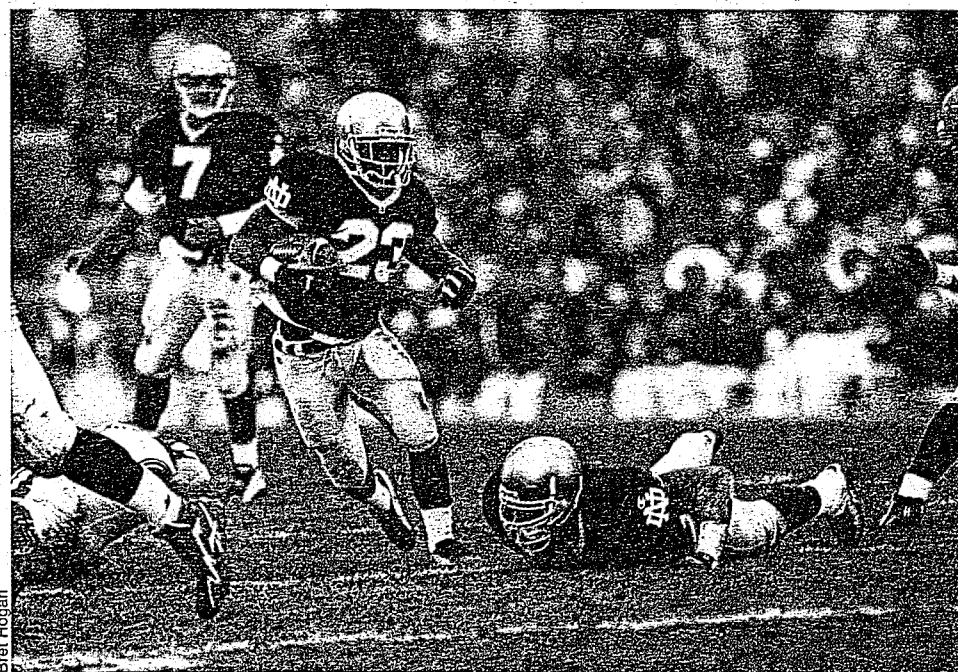


Stan Evans

Get out of my way. Freshman wide receiver Raki Nelson tries to elude some would-be Rutgers tacklers.

It was Holtz's 100th and last win at the school. It was the last game in the old stadium. It was the game in which Autry Denson eclipsed 1,000 yards rushing for the season, only the sixth player in Notre Dame history to do so. It was the game in which Ron Powlus broke Rick Mirer's mark for career touchdown passes to move into the

plays after an Allen Rossum interception at the Rutgers 42, the Irish got on the board with an 8-yard touchdown pass from Powlus to Denson, Powlus's first of four touchdown passes. On the next series, Kevin Carretta blocked a Rutgers punt, which was scooped up by freshman Joey Goodspeed and returned 33 yards for Notre Dame's



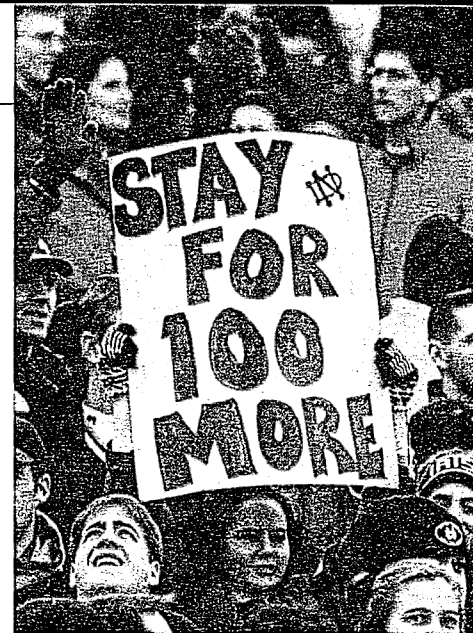
Bret Hogan

Look at that hole! Autry Denson rolls ahead as the offensive line runs over the Rutgers defense. The Irish rushed for 329 yards.

record books. It was a gracious farewell to a coach who is already a legend and whose accomplishments are outshined only by a character that embodies the spirit of Notre Dame.

But the season did not end here, and the heartbreaking loss to USC a week later overshadowed not only the final home game but the entire 1996 campaign, leaving the Bowl Alliance out of reach. In retrospect, it must be considered that the victory over Rutgers, though the final score indicated an easy win, was emotionally draining. The players left their hearts on the field that day, causing them to travel to Los Angeles without the same intensity they showed against the Scarlet Knights. Flat play the week following an emotional victory is as common to Notre Dame football as clouds are to South Bend.

Nevertheless, the Rutgers game was one of the most entertaining in recent memory, even though the contest was over quite early. Four



Bret Hogan

“I think today is my favorite memory. I’m proud to leave the university and say that I did not embarrass it. ... I can look at God and say that I think I left it clean.”

— Lou Holtz

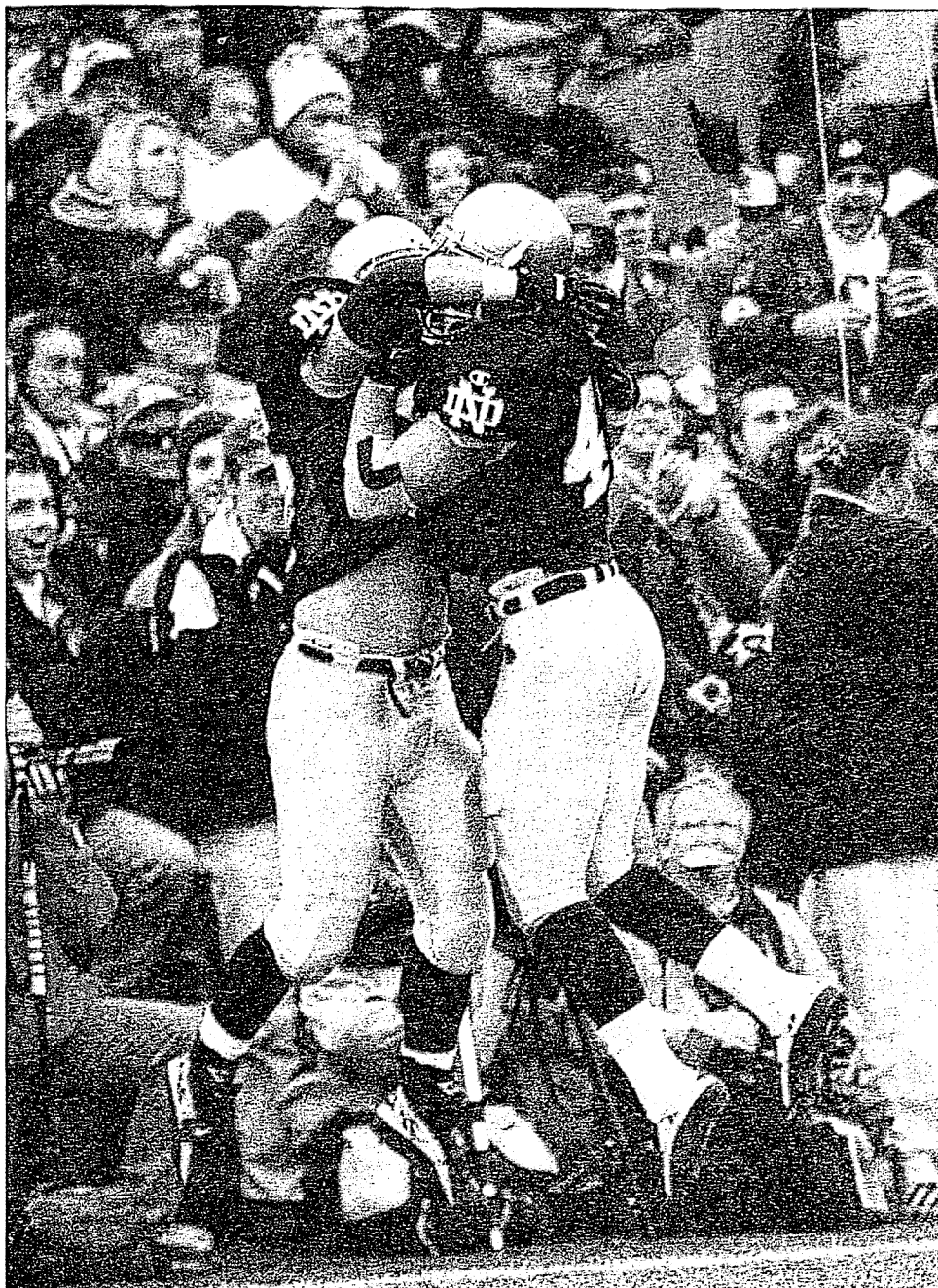
second touchdown. The Irish owned the momentum for the rest of the game.

Eight different players scored in the 62-0 rout. It marked the most points scored by the Irish since 1977 and their largest margin of victory since 1966, when the Duke Blue Devils were the victims of a 64-0 massacre.

From the opening offensive series, it was apparent that Lou Holtz wanted Powlus to throw the ball. After the game he admitted, “We just got into a rhythm. Today we planned to throw more.” No kidding. At halftime, the Irish had 202 passing yards and only 99 rushing, an unusual ratio for a Holtz-style offense.

Did Holtz plan for Powlus to break Mirer's record for career touchdown passes? Let's just say he had it in mind. “I'm happy that Ron Powlus beat Mirer in touchdowns thrown in a career,” he said.

After Powlus's 42-yard touchdown strike to Malcolm Johnson on the first series of the third quarter (the record-breaking 42nd touchdown pass), which made the score 41-0, it was substitution time and a last chance



Stan Evans

Let's celebrate. Joey Goodspeed gets congratulations after returning a blocked punt 33 yards for a touchdown to make the score 14-0.

for the graduating seniors to enjoy a stadium in which they would never play again. What followed was a quarter-and-a-half of running out the clock.

This game was special for the seniors, particularly for defensive leader Bert Berry. "This was a great experience for my last game at home," he said. "We wanted to go out in style this year. In years past the seniors were not able to go out in style. We never let down today, because we did not want to lose." Hopefully, this is the game

the seniors will remember, although pain is traditionally more difficult to shake than happiness.

Even if the memory eludes the players, it will always be with Lou Holtz: "I think today is my favorite memory. I'm proud to leave the university and say that I did not embarrass it, at least I think I did not. I ran an honest program. I tried to live and encourage the players to live by the values that this university espouses. I can look at God and say that I think I left it clean." □

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

26 Rutgers

329 ND

Passing Yards

29 Rutgers

319 ND

Total Yardage

43 Rutgers

648 ND

First Downs

6 Rutgers

27 ND

Time of Possession

26:18 Rutgers

33:42 ND

Penalties (Yards)

62 Rutgers

80 ND

SCORING

Rutgers	0	0	0	0	0
Notre Dame	21	14	13	14	62

1st Quarter

ND: Denson 8 pass from Powlus at 10:22 (McDonnell PAT)

ND: Goodspeed 33 blocked punt return at 6:33 (McDonnell PAT)

ND: Spencer 13 pass from Powlus at 4:07 (Sanson PAT)

2nd Quarter

ND: Farmer 9 run at 6:13 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Chryplewicz 3 pass from Powlus at 2:43 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

ND: Johnson 42 pass from Powlus at 11:16 (Sanson PAT failed)

ND: Mosley 6 run at 5:53 (Sanson PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Nelson 38 pass from Jackson at 14:51 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Farmer 13 run at 11:33 (Sanson PAT)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 10th

Father Knows Best

Team chaplain Fr. James Riehle has lent his spiritual voice to the football program for more than two decades

BY BRIAN HIRO

Ask Fr. James Riehle, now in his 21st year as chaplain for the Notre Dame Athletic Department, about his most memorable Irish football game and you might be surprised by the answer.

He does not cite the historic tie with Michigan State in 1966, his first time on the sidelines as a chaplain. There is no mention of the 31-30 win over Miami in the championship season of 1988. Not even the "Game of the Century" versus Florida State in 1993. No, Fr. Riehle (pronounced "really") will not satisfy our curiosity. He deflects the question the way Deion Sanders deflects a crossing pass.

"I think to be specific and talk about football games as such, I just can't do that," he responds. "Football to me is just a part of what the University of Notre Dame is. A lot of people have profited from [football], not in a financial sense but by growing and using the experiences to become a better person."

How fitting that Riehle, raised in Saginaw, Mich., should talk about becoming a better person. He has been helping students and administrators do just that since coming to the university 32 years ago. Even more fitting, he wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'm very people-oriented," he says. "I don't care about statistics, and details drive me nuts. What matters to me are the people involved. I'm interested in the



MARY, QUEEN OF VICTORY, PRAY FOR US. Father Riehle has been on the sidelines since 1976, but his link to the university began in 1949 when he graduated.

courtesy of ND Sports Information

kids as kids, how they are as human beings."

Here are some details even Riehle could appreciate. Beginning with his assignment as chaplain for Dillon Hall in 1964, he has contributed to Notre Dame in almost every way imaginable. At various times, he has been assistant dean of students, dean of students, rector of Sorin Hall, rector of Pangborn Hall, chairman of the board of directors for the University Club and director of energy conservation. Age has whittled Riehle's duties to two: athletic department chaplain and executive director of the Notre Dame National Monogram Club, an organization of 5,000 alumni who earned at least one varsity monogram while in school.

Because Riehle has long been the football team's sole chaplain, one might think that this is a university tradition. This is not the case.

"Notre Dame has always had chaplains for football," explains Riehle, who graduated from the university in 1949 with a degree in business administration and did not become a priest until the age of 39.

"It started back in the 1930s. But they

There's no one who succeeds at everything they do and the sooner you realize that the better off you'll be. Maybe the best you can do is not enough. I think that might have been the case against Ohio State."

Whatever the case, it certainly wasn't

"He is a special individual," Lou Holtz says. "He is a very positive influence on both me personally and on the football team. He's one of those guys like Moose Krause in that he's been here for most of his life and now is part of the institution. I respect him

"The spirit of Notre Dame is the realization that the university is bigger than we are individually and the willingness to make a sacrifice."

because of a lack of prayer. Two-and-a-half hours before every home game, Riehle celebrates Mass with the team. "A unity thing," he calls the service. Later, when the players run off the field after warm-ups, Riehle greets them at the top of the stairs leading to the locker room with an individual blessing. This procedure is repeated at the end of each half. And before the coach gives his pre-game speech, Riehle leads the team in the

greatly."

"Fr. Riehle has a life on campus that has spanned a number of years and a large cross-section of people," adds Fr. William Beauchamp, executive vice president of the university. "He has obviously touched many lives. Now it is through athletics, but it used to be so much more. I can recall a number of times when his name would come up in a conversation, and someone would say, 'Oh, Fr. Riehle, I remember him,' then start into a story."

With his career at the school winding down, Riehle has the opportunity to reflect on Notre Dame and the meaning it holds for him.

"[Notre Dame] is a comradeship over something that's bigger than we are," he says. "I think that everybody in life ultimately comes to the point where they realize that something is bigger than they are and want to make a contribution to that and become absorbed in it."

"I think that's true of the family. If the husband is only interested in his own needs, then he's never going to be a good father or good spouse. A marriage is bigger than the two people who are involved in it. And that's the same here. The spirit of Notre Dame is the realization that the university is bigger than we are individually and the willingness to make a sacrifice."

Some take longer to come to this realization than others.

"One of the interesting things about being here so long is that you get to know some of the assistant coaches when they come in," says Riehle. "And an awful lot have said to me, 'Boy, I hated this place. Just grew up hating it. Then once I got here, I found out what a truly special place it is.' I think that speaks well of us."

And it speaks well of Riehle. □

Seen Rudy? That's Riehle, as himself, saying the traditional prayers just prior to Rudy's shining moment.

used to alternate chaplains for road games. When I left the office of dean of students in 1973, they got to thinking that it would be good to have one person as chaplain because the players get used to you and they're more comfortable with the same guy. I was interested, so Fr. Joyce asked me if I wanted to be full chaplain on a one-year trial basis. That was 1976, and it's been that way ever since."

As chaplain, Riehle brings a spiritual presence to the football locker room. It is not a very active role — Riehle uses the word "figurehead" in his description — but he does tend to the religious needs of the players and makes himself available to listen to their problems. His help was in great demand following the devastating loss to Ohio State this year.

"When I talked to the kids after the game, I took the attitude that this is an experience for them to learn how to cope, how to be a man, how to accept things that happen to them," he says. "I mean, you have to learn.

"Hail Mary" and "Our Lady, Queen of Victory." Seen *Rudy*? That's Riehle, as himself, saying the traditional prayers just prior to Rudy's shining moment.

"I knew Rudy very well," Riehle says. "And he wanted me in the movie. It just worked out that they needed that scene for the film."

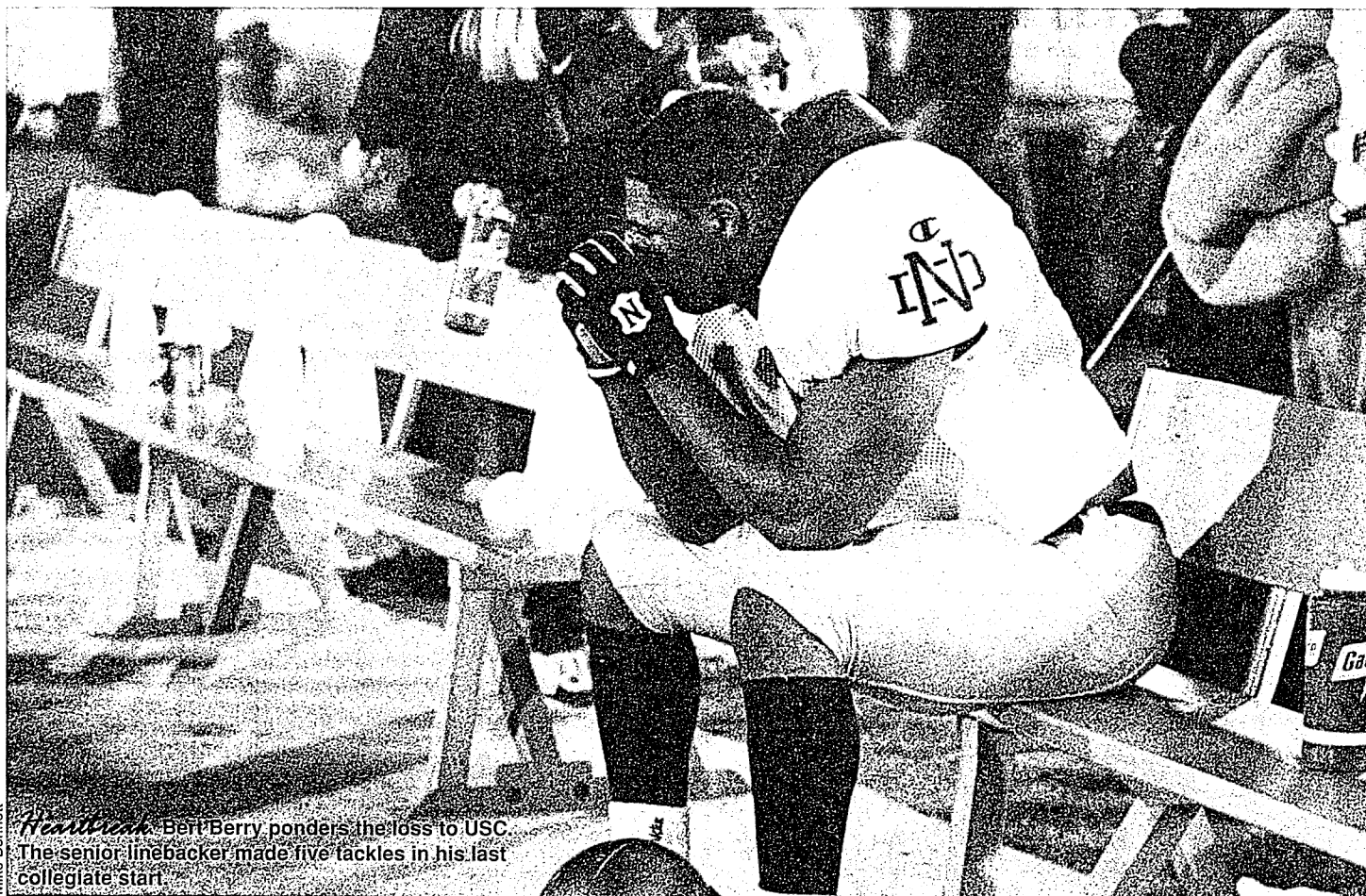
What other players stick out in his memory from the past 21 years?

"I'd like to think I have a good rapport with all of them. That's just my personality to be inclusive of everyone," he says. "A lot of players come back for the games and stand on the sidelines, and I love going down there to see them because they all come up and give me a big hug. I think there's a bond that develops while they're here, not just because it's me, but because it's part of their life experience."

Riehle might play more of a part than he would like to admit in these close ties. Just ask those who count him among their dearest friends.

T

hrough their cardinal-and-gold-colored glasses, USC fans saw this as the year The Streak would finally end. It *must* end. Sure, they reasoned, Notre Dame has God on its side, but how long must we suffer? The 10 plagues must have been tame compared to the inhumanity of 13 years without a win over the Irish.



Mike Bennett

Heartbreak Bert Berry ponders the loss to USC. The senior linebacker made five tackles in his last collegiate start.

END OF AN ERA *USC*

BY
BRIAN
HIRO

Pretty convincing stuff, but Irish backers weren't buying it. "This isn't your year," you could hear them say. "You're 5-6; what do you have to play for? Nothing. We have a major bowl bid on the line, not to mention the Lou Holtz Farewell Tour. Plus, we've really gotten used to making fun of your ineptitude. Oh, and a streak can't end on 13; it's unlucky. No, not this year. You can win next year when Holtz is gone. We're good at losing at home anyway."

Into the middle of this debate stepped USC senior quarterback Brad Otton. After being knocked from the game with bruised ribs in the first quarter, he returned in the second half to lead the Trojans to three

touchdowns, including the decisive score on the first series of overtime. As the Memorial Coliseum crowd roared loudly enough to erase 13 years' worth of bad memories, Ron Powlus's fourth-down pass to Malcolm Johnson on Notre Dame's overtime possession was batted down at the line of scrimmage. The USC faithful had to look twice to believe what they were seeing: USC 27, Notre Dame 20, on the scoreboard, and Trojan players jumping in celebration on the field.

Considering the way in which they lost the game — four fumbles and a missed extra point that led to the extra session — Holtz and the Irish had to look twice as well.

"I feel like somebody reached into my stomach and pulled out my guts," Holtz said after the game. "I've never felt this low."

You got the feeling this wasn't Holtz's famed hyperbole, either. Like last year's finale against Air Force, this was an eight-million-dollar affair. Win, and the Irish would be off to sunny Tempe for the Fiesta Bowl and a chance at a top-five finish; lose, and they would be home for the holidays. Such is Notre Dame's good-bowl-or-no-bowl status in the crazy adventure known as the Bowl Alliance.

But more importantly, the USC game was a chance to further straighten a wavering ship, a chance for Notre Dame to stamp itself as an upper-echelon program for the first time since 1993. Throw in the whole last-game-at-the-school twist and you can see why Holtz was so distraught at the postgame news conference.

And why the opposing coach and quarterback were so happy.

"This is one of the great moments of my life," said USC Head Coach John Robinson, who was the subject of rumors earlier in the week that he would join Holtz in the unemployment line unless he beat the Irish. "This team has stayed together all along. We've experienced a lot of adversity, but this team hung in there."

"We'll always be known as the team that ended the streak, and that means a lot," Otton added.

All the good luck the Irish had enjoyed in squeaking by the Trojans so many times during the Holtz era seemed to evaporate this night. When Powlus found receiver Cikai Champion wide open in the corner of the end zone from 25 yards out, the visitors took what appeared to be a comfortable 14-6 lead into the final quarter, especially since the Irish defense had not yielded a single



Slipping away. Emmett Mosley is stripped of the ball in the first quarter. It was the first of Notre Dame's four fumbles.

yard in the third. But nothing went right after that.

On Notre Dame's next possession following a failed USC fake punt, Powlus hit Johnson over the middle for 33 yards, but Trojan safety Sammy Knight stripped the ball and recovered it himself just a yard away from another Irish score. Knight, in his USC finale, had a career game, finishing with 14 tackles (three for losses), two fumble recoveries and a sack.

"Sammy Knight is one of the best football players I've ever been around," Robinson said. "He's also one of the best people I've ever been around. He was just great to-night."

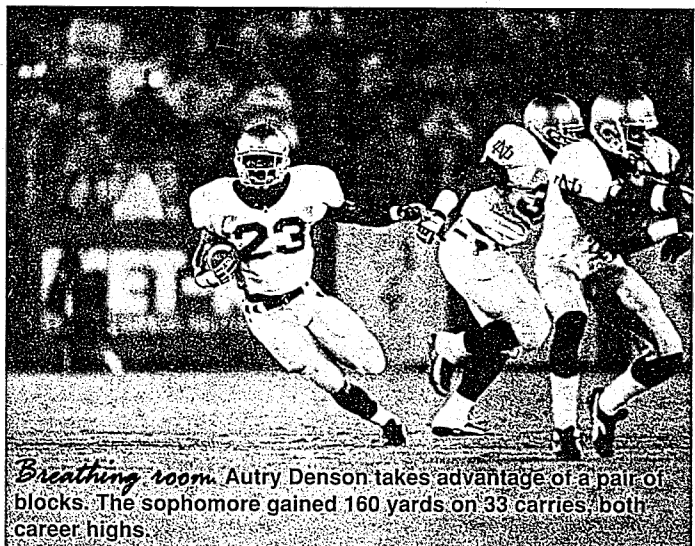
After the fumble, the Irish still had the Trojans backed up against their goal line. But on the first play, Otton found receiver Mike Bastianelli for 33 yards and some breathing room. In just two plays, the momentum had shifted dramatically.

It would get worse for the Irish. After the defense forced a punt, Allen Rossum fumbled his second punt of the game, this one at his own 12, to gift-wrap a score for USC. Otton accepted Notre Dame's generosity, hitting Chris Miller for a 5-yard touchdown. Only an unsuccessful two-point conversion

prevented the Trojans from knotting the score.

But as they always have done under Holtz, the Irish answered an important score with one of their own. Autry Denson dominated the drive, getting the call on seven of the nine plays for 39 yards, including a 9-yard burst up the middle to give his team a 20-12 lead. As Knight did for the Trojans, Denson turned in a career-best performance with 33 carries for 160 yards and the touchdown. It marked his fifth consecutive 100-yard game, his seventh of the season and his 10th at the school.

But Jim Sanson's ensuing PAT attempt, the point that could have sealed the win, sailed wide left and the Notre Dame lead remained at eight. You could almost see the Trojan spirits lift on the sideline, as if they sensed that fate was finally on their side.



Breathing room. Autry Denson takes advantage of a pair of blocks. The sophomore gained 160 yards on 33 carries, both career highs.

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

260 ND

92 USC

Passing Yards

108 ND

210 USC

Total Yardage

368 ND

302 USC

First Downs

19 ND

18 USC

Time of Possession

36:00 ND

24:00 USC

Penalties (Yards)

65 ND

61 USC

SCORING

Notre Dame	0	7	7	6	0	20
USC	6	0	0	14	7	27

1st Quarter

USC: Abrams 30 FG at 13:00

USC: Abrams 38 FG at 5:13

2nd Quarter

ND: Spencer 1 run at 14:23 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

ND: Champion 25 pass from Powlus at :23 (Sanson PAT)

4th Quarter

USC: Miller 5 pass from Otton at 8:22 (pass failed)

ND: Denson 9 run at 3:52 (Sanson PAT failed)

USC: Washington 15 run at 1:50 (Washington run)

Overtime

USC: Sermons 5 pass from Otton (Abrams PAT)

PREGAME AP RANKING: 10th

Holtz had earlier switched holders for the first time all season, replacing Hunter Smith with Powlus, but he didn't use that as an excuse.

"The young man seemed to kick better with Ron Powlus holding," Holtz said. "He almost missed the first extra point, so I said, 'Ron, you go ahead and hold it,' and he boomed the second one. So we stayed with Ron."

USC capitalized on the error, marching 67 yards in eight plays behind the passing of Otton and the running of tailback Delon Washington. Washington went the final 15 yards for the touchdown, darting right to pull the Trojans back within two. This time, however, they converted the two-point try, tying the game at 20 and sending the stadium into a frenzy.

But the crowd would get even louder. It got louder when the Trojans stymied the Irish on their final possession of regulation to ensure overtime. It got much louder when Otton tossed a 5-yard touchdown pass to Rodney Sermons to put his team up by seven and the pressure firmly on Notre

Dame's back. And it erupted when the Irish wilted under that pressure, gaining just one yard on four plays to seal the outcome. As Trojan fans rushed the field and mobbed the players, Holtz reflected on the devastating turn of events he had just witnessed.

"That's probably as tough a loss as I've ever had," he said. "So many things went wrong. The four turnovers, two by receivers. ... The missed extra point was critical because it kept them in the game."

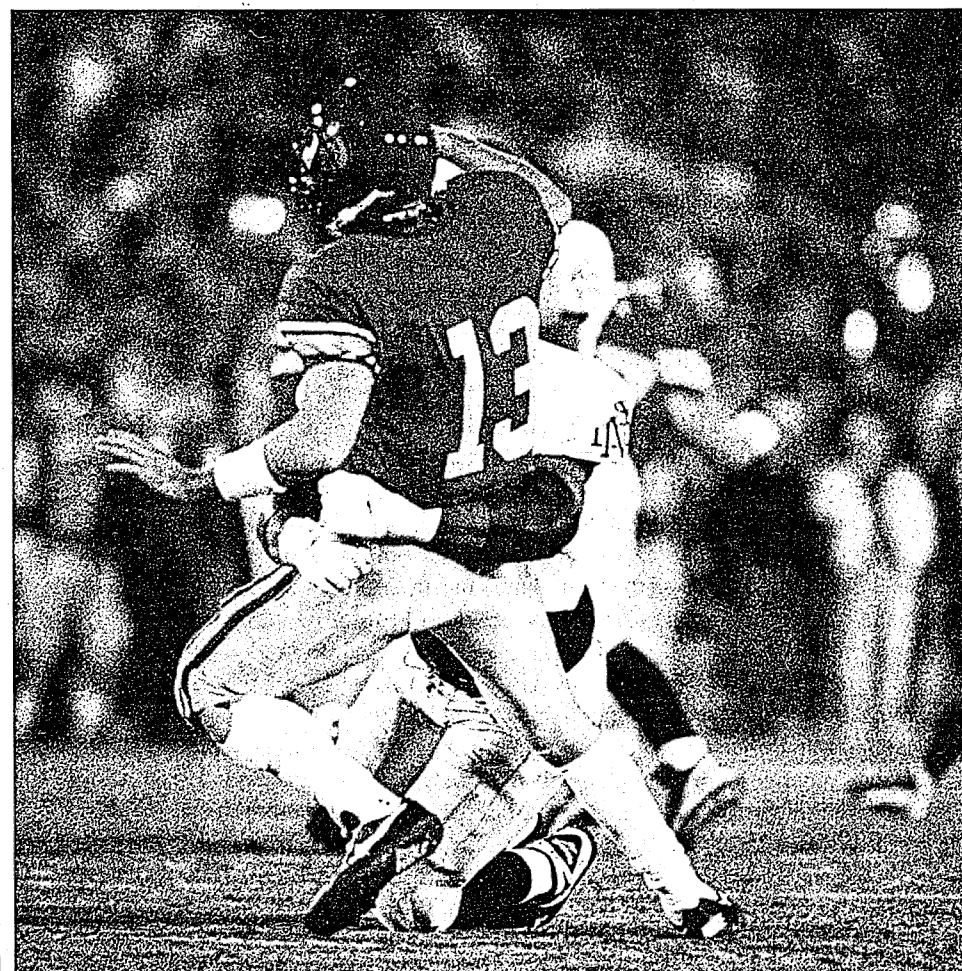
"Just when we got ready to put the nail in the coffin, we couldn't quite do it. That's life. Life goes on."

It didn't seem that way for the Notre Dame players when Holtz told them in the locker room that this would be their final game. There would be no bowl for the Irish for the first time since 1986. Ironically, that was Holtz's first year at the school. But Holtz was in no mood for irony after his last appearance on the Notre Dame sidelines.



"This is one you'll remember," he said. "One you'll remember for a long time."


Thanks to USC, he has all the time in the world. □

Ouch! Despite a first-quarter injury, Trojan quarterback Brad Otton returned in heroic fashion, passing for touchdowns in the fourth quarter and overtime.



Mike Bennett



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The All-Opponent Team



Fisher DeBerry, Head Coach

Air Force

Ohio State was simply better and USC was playing at home with 13 years of pent-up frustration. But how DeBerry got his undersized and athletically-challenged players to win in Notre Dame Stadium is a question for the ages.

Paul Johnson, Offensive Coordinator

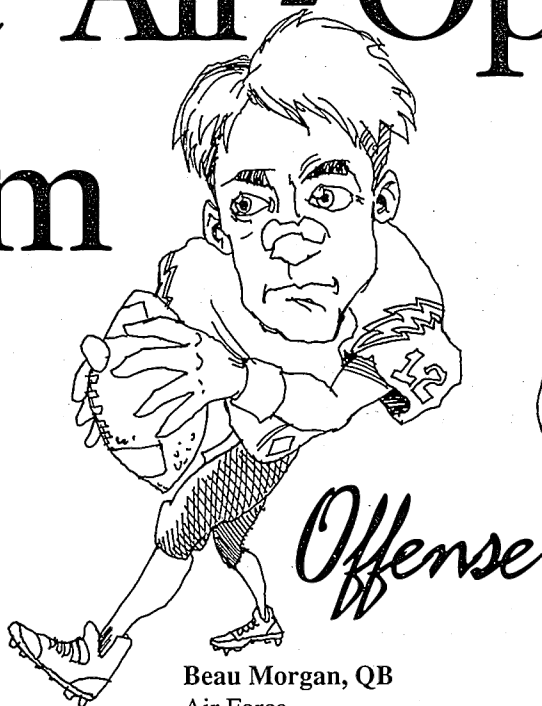
Navy

For the second straight year the Midshipmen outgained Notre Dame. Now if only they had a defense.

Cal McCombs, Defensive Coordinator

Air Force

After getting the Matador Award last year, his troops held the Irish to 67 rushing yards, the lowest ever under Holtz. Perhaps the most mind-boggling statistic of the year.



Beau Morgan, QB

Air Force

Almost single-handedly willed the Falcons to their gutsy overtime win in Notre Dame Stadium with 183 yards rushing and flawless execution of the option.

Pepe Pearson, RB

Ohio State

Followed mammoth holes opened by Mr. Pancake, er, Pace, to the tune of 173 yards and two touchdowns. His onslaught left the Irish defense anything but peppy.

Omari Walker, RB

Boston College

Would the Eagles have hung with the Irish through three quarters without his 158 yards and two touchdowns? Don't bet on it.

Mike Adams, WR

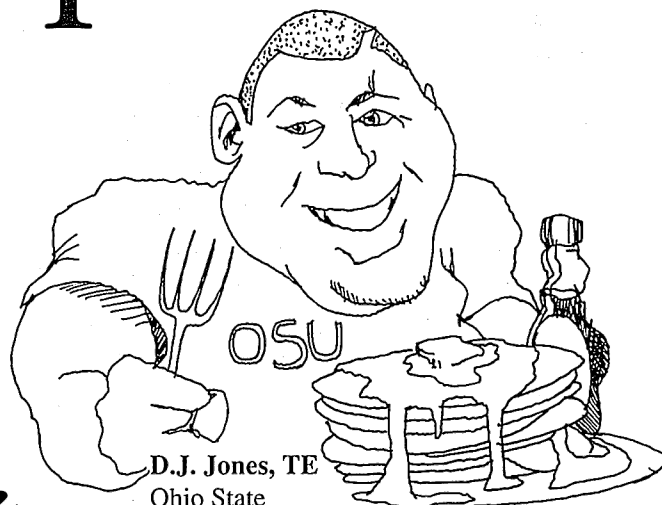
Texas

Honorable Mention All-Opponent last year, Adams moves up this year on the strength of his six-catch, 76-yard performance against Allen Rossum. But he disappeared down the stretch when the Longhorns needed him most.

Chris Miller, WR

USC

In a weak year for opposing receivers, Miller makes the squad with his four grabs for 69 yards and one score.



D.J. Jones, TE

Ohio State

Just two catches, but one of them was a 13-yard touchdown that gave the Buckeyes a 29-10 lead at the end of the third quarter and sealed the outcome.

Orlando Pace, OT

Ohio State

Flattened Melvin Dansby and the rest of the Irish defense in a way that would have made Mrs. Butterworth proud; repeat All-Opponent performer.

Dan Oriskovich, OT

Boston College

Four-year starter who took over Pete Kendall's tackle spot and thrived for the Eagles.

Carlton Hendrix, OG

Air Force

The wishbone doesn't work without perfect blocking, meaning Hendrix and mates must have been darn near perfect against the Irish.

Dan Neil, OG

Texas

First-team All-American opened the holes that Little Earl (Ricky Williams) galloped through; Honorable Mention All-Opponent last year.

Juan Porter, C

Ohio State

Would be the stud on any other line, but he plays in the enormous shadow of Pace; still one of the best in the Big Ten.

Defense

Chris Schweighardt, DL

Air Force

That this 5'11", 225-pounder fought off Notre Dame's mammoth offensive line to record six tackles and a sack is remarkable.

Mike Willetts, DL

Boston College

The redshirt freshman made 10 tackles and forced a fumble; should be a thorn in Notre Dame's side for the next three years.

Mike Vrabel, DL

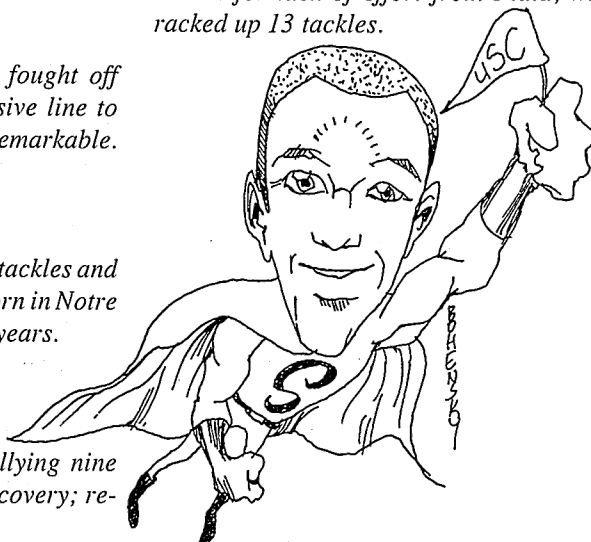
Ohio State

Very able against the Irish, tallying nine tackles, a sack and a fumble recovery; repeat All-Opponent.

John Fiala, LB

Washington

The Huskies may have surrendered an obscene number of yards to the Irish, but it wasn't for lack of effort from Fiala, who racked up 13 tackles.



Sammy Knight, LB

USC

His superhuman performance—14 tackles, a sack, one forced fumble and two recoveries—was a big reason the Trojans ended The Streak. Irish fans are happy he's graduating.

Shawn Springs, CB

Ohio State

Rendered the Blarney offense useless with his blanket coverage of Irish receivers; repeat All-Opponent.

Bryant Westbrook, CB

Texas

Like Springs, his unimpressive numbers are only for fear of throwing in his direction; he and Springs could be the first two corners picked in this year's draft.

Chris Carter, S

Texas

Made it dangerous to enter the secondary with his bone-jarring hits; his 18 tackles were the most of any opponent.

Derrick Brown, S

Purdue

The only Boilermaker to show up, he recorded 13 tackles and one of only four Ron Powlus interceptions this year; repeat All-Opponent.



Greg Bellisari, LB

Ohio State

Sometimes got lost in the shuffle with the attention showered on freshman phenom Andy Katzenmoyer, but it was Bellisari who shined against the Irish with 14 tackles (three for losses) and a sack; repeat All-Opponent.

Jamie Duncan, LB

Vanderbilt

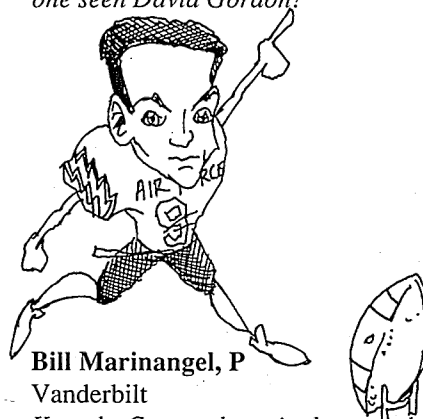
His hard hits contributed to the butterfingers of the Irish backs as he forced two fumbles to go along with his 13 tackles.

Special Teams

Dallas Thompson, K

Air Force

Both of his kicks were chip shots of under 30 yards, but the second put him in the not-so-exclusive club of Irish-killing kickers. Anyone seen David Gordon?



Bill Marinangel, P

Vanderbilt

Kept the Commodores in the game by averaging 47 yards on eight punts, including four inside the 20; repeat All-Opponent.

Dimitrious Stanley, KR

Ohio State

His 85-yard return to start the game silenced the pumped-up crowd and set the tone for the Buckeye domination.

Buckeyes and Falcons — no surprise — dominate the list of the best the Irish faced in 1996

1996 final Regular Season Statistics

RESULTS AND ATTENDANCE

Sept. 5 at Vandy	W 14-7	41,523
Sept. 14 PURDUE	W 35-0	59,075
Sept. 21 at Texas	W 27-24	83,312
Sept. 28 OHIO ST.	L 29-16	59,075
Oct. 12 WASH.	W 54-20	59,075
Oct. 19 A.F.	L 20-17 OT	59,075
Nov. 2 at Navy	W 54-27	38,651
Nov. 9 at BC	W 48-21	44,500
Nov. 16 PITT	W 60-6	59,075
Nov. 23 RUTGERS	W 62-0	59,075
Nov. 30 at USC	L 27-20 OT	90,296

TEAM STATISTICS

	ND	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	258	170
Rushing	161	82
Passing	87	77
Penalty	10	11
3rd Down Conv.	47%	28%
4th Down Conv.	58%	67%
TOTAL PLAYS	817	714
TOTAL NET YDS	5096	2970
Ave. per play	6.2	4.2
Ave. per game	463.3	270.0
RUSHING YARDAGE	2965	1314
Ave. per Rush	5.2	3.1
Yds. Rushing/Game	269.5	119.5
Rushing TDs	34	14
PASSING YARDAGE	2131	1656
Attempts	250	292
Completions	145	131
Interceptions	4	13
Percentage	.580	.449
Ave. per Catch	14.7	12.6
Ave. per Game	193.7	150.5
Passing TDs	15	9
FUMBLES-LOST	33-23	17-11
PENALTIES-YDS	66-603	64-513
TIME OF POSS.	33:23	26:37

SCORE BY PER. 1 2 3 4 OT TOT

NOTRE DAME	80	135	95	97	0	407
OPPONENTS	31	52	35	53	10	181

PUNT RETURNS No. Yds Ave TD LP

Denson, A.	18	196	10.9	1	74
Rossum, A.	15	344	22.9	3	83
Mosley, E.	2	14	7.0	0	14
Berry, B.	1	5	5.0	0	0
Carretta, K.	1	8	8.0	0	0
Goodspeed, J.	0	33	0.0	1	33
Total	37	600	16.2	5	83
Opponents	24	188	7.8	0	17

SCORING

	TD	Run	Rec	Kick	FG/A	Pts
Denson, A.	11	—	—	—	—	66
Edwards	10	1-2	—	—	—	62
Sanson, J.	0	—	—	39-45	6-9	57
Farmer, R.	8	—	—	—	—	48
Spencer, J.	6	0-1	—	—	—	36
Rossum, A.	4	—	—	—	—	24
Chryplewicz	4	—	—	—	—	24
Kinder, R.	3	—	—	—	—	18
Johnson, M.	2	—	—	—	—	12
Goodspeed	2	—	—	—	—	12
Champion	1	—	—	—	—	6
Stephens, S.	1	—	—	—	—	6
Carretta, K.	1	—	—	—	—	6
Wynn, R.	1	—	—	—	—	6
Mosley, E.	1	—	—	—	—	6
Maiden, A.	1	—	—	—	—	6
Nelson, R.	1	—	—	—	—	6
McDonnell	0	—	—	3-3	—	3
Palumbo, S.	0	—	—	2-3	—	2
McCarthy	0	—	—	1-2	—	1
Cengia, S.	0	—	—	—	0-1	0
Powlus, R.	0	0-1	—	—	—	0
Total	57	1-4	—	45-53	6-10	407
Opponents	23	1-2	1-5	15-16	8-12	181

RUSHING Att Yds Ave /G TD LP

Denson, A.	202	1179	5.8	107.2	8	47
Farmer, R.	78	660	8.5	60.0	8	81
Edwards	83	381	4.6	47.6	8	41
Kinder, R.	53	247	4.7	30.9	3	28
Spencer, J.	38	222	5.8	22.2	5	40
Barry, K.	-12	80	6.7	11.4	0	33
Goodspeed	16	57	3.6	6.3	0	11
Mosley, E.	11	57	5.2	5.2	1	16
Champion, C.	1	39	39.0	3.9	0	39
Jackson, J.	11	16	1.5	2.7	0	21
Stephens, S.	3	12	4.0	1.5	0	10
Carretta, K.	3	9	3.0	0.8	1	5
Powlus, R.	53	8	0.2	0.7	0	22
Palumbo, S.	2	2	1.0	0.4	0	3
Cooper, D.	1	-4	-4.0	-0.4	0	0
Total	567	2965	5.2	269.5	34	81
Opponents	422	1314	3.1	119.5	14	38

PASSING Cmp Att Yds TD Int LP

Powlus, R.	133	232	1942	12	4	64
Jackson, J.	10	15	181	3	0	38
Smith, H.	2	3	8	0	0	4
Total	145	250	2131	15	4	64
Opponents	131	292	1656	9	13	55

PUNTING No. Yds Ave Blkd LP

Smith, H.	44	1906	43.3	0	65
Wachtel, C.	1	47	47.0	0	47
Palumbo, S.	1	39	39.0	0	39
Total	46	1992	43.3	0	65
Opponents	84	3431	40.8	2	66

RECEIVING No Yds Ave /G TD LP

Chryplewicz	27	331	12.3	30.1	4	32
Johnson, M.	25	449	18.0	40.8	2	48
Mosley, E.	24	369	15.4	33.5	0	64
Edwards, M.	16	179	11.2	22.4	2	39
Denson, A.	11	111	10.1	10.1	2	34
Stephens, S.	9	193	21.4	24.1	1	42
Nelson, R.	8	128	16.0	12.8	1	38
Spencer, J.	8	61	7.6	6.1	1	23
Carretta, K.	5	91	18.2	8.3	0	42
Champion, C.	5	83	16.6	8.3	1	29
Brown, B.	2	84	42.0	10.5	0	49
Goodspeed	1	22	22.0	2.4	1	22
Farmer, R.	1	13	13.0	1.2	0	13
Cooper, D.	1	9	9.0	0.9	0	9
Berry, B.	1	4	4.0	0.4	0	4
Cerasani, J.	1	4	4.0	0.4	0	4
Total	145	2131	14.7	193.7	15	64
Opponents	131	1656	12.6	150.5	9	55

KICK RET. No. Yds Ave TD LP

Farmer, R.	8	126	15.8	0	27
Denson, A.	7	141	20.1	0	35
Rossum, A.	6	227	37.8	1	99
Spencer, J.	2	47	23.5	0	27
Mosley, E.	2	39	19.5	0	21
Barry, K.	1	4	4.0	0	4
Goodspeed, J.	1	44	44.0	0	44
Total	27	628	23.3	1	99
Opponents	59	1315	22.3	0	85

INT RETURNS No. Yds Ave TD LP

Guilbeaux, B.	4	42	10.5	0	42
Cooper, D.	3	61	20.3	0	34
Rossum, A.	2	8	4.0	0	8
Tatum, K.	1	0	0.0	0	0
Cobbins, L.	1	0	0.0	0	0
Minor, K.	1	17	17.0	0	17
Edison, J.	1	35	35.0	0	35
Total	13	165	12.7	0	42
Opponents	4	52	13.0	0	29

Tackles: Tatum 77, Cobbins 72, Guilbeaux 62, Wynn 61, Berry 60, Maiden 56, Dansby 55, Minor 53, Covington 53, Rossum 50, Cooper 29, Bennett 21, Howard 20, Edison 19, Bryant 19, Sanders 18, Carretta 17, Wagasy 16, Babey 8, Harper 7, Belisle 7, Jones 6, Goode 6, Quist 6, Kinder 5, Mitoulas 5, Goodspeed 5, Denson 3, Spickelmier 3, Nicks 2, Friday 2, Thomas 2, Barry 1, Stephens 1, Gibbs 1, Powlus 1, Edwards 1, Cerasani 1, Doughty 1, Sanson 1, Lynch 1, McCarthy 1

Sacks: Berry 10-87, Wynn 9-79, Minor 8-66, Cobbins 4-32, Dansby 3.5-34, Howard 2-13, Wagasy 1.5-14, Tatum 1-8, Bennett 1-8, Guilbeaux 1-6, Bryant .5-7

Honors and Awards

Jeremy Akers, offensive guard

- State Farm/Mutual Radio Student-Athlete of the Year
- ESPN/Honda Scholar Athlete of the Week Award vs. Vanderbilt
- Burger King Scholar-Athlete Award vs. Washington
- College Football Association Scholar Athlete Team
- CoSIDA/GTE Academic All-America All-District team

Bert Berry, outside linebacker

- Nominee for Butkus Award as top linebacker in the country
- *Football News* All-America (honorable mention)
- *Football News* All-Independent team

Kevin Carretta, tight end

- Nick Pietrosante Award (by vote of players to individual who best personifies characteristics of late Irish All-America fullback)
- Notre Dame Club of St. Joseph Valley Knute Rockne Student-Athlete Award

Pete Chryplewicz, tight end

- *Football News* All-America (honorable mention)
- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Air Force (3 catches for 70 yards)

Lyron Cobbins, inside linebacker

- Nominee for Butkus Award as top linebacker in the country

Autry Denson, tailback

- *Football News* All-America (honorable mention)
- *Football News* All-Independent team
- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Purdue (15 rushes for 66 yards, 2 TDs; 3 catches for 61 yards, 1 TD)
- ABC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Texas (24 rushes for 158 yards, 1 TD)
- ABC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. USC (33 rushes for career-high 160 yards, 1 TD)

Mike Doughty, offensive tackle

- *Football News* All-America (honorable mention)
- *Football News* All-Independent team

Marc Edwards, fullback

- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Ohio State (2 TDs)
- Nominee for Doak Walker Award as top running back in the country

Kory Minor, outside linebacker

- Nominee for Butkus Award as top linebacker in the country

Ron Powlus, quarterback

- One of 11 candidates for Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award as top quarterback in the country
- One of seven finalists for Johnny Unitas Award as top quarterback in the country
- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Rutgers (14 of 18 for 257 yards and a single-game-record-tying 4 TDs)

Allen Rossum, cornerback

- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Pittsburgh (punt returns for TDs of 83 and 55 yards)

Renaldo Wynn, defensive end

- Notre Dame National Monogram Club MVP (by vote of players)
- Notre Dame Lineman-of-the-Year by Moose Krause Chapter of National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame
- *Football News* All-Independent team

Offensive Line

- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Washington (397 rushing yards, 650 total yards)

All-Scholastic Honors

Offensive Player of the Year: Autry Denson

Defensive Player of the Year: Renaldo Wynn

Special Teams Player of the Year: Allen Rossum

Offensive Most-Improved: Malcolm Johnson

Defensive Most-Improved: Benny Guilbeaux

Best Potential Offense: Jamie Spencer

Best Potential Defense: Deveron Harper

Offensive Play of the Year: Farmer's 81-yard run vs. Boston College

Defensive Play of the Year: Cobbins's interception vs. Texas

Best Opponent's Crowd: USC

Matador Award: Rutgers Defense

Play We're Most Sick of: Watching other teams rush our field

Best Band Halftime Show: Zorba the Greek

Worst Band Halftime Show: The Macarena

Best Halftime Show: The marshmallow fight in the senior section vs. Rutgers

Strangest Field Rush: ND after Rutgers



Bittersweet Ending

by Dennis Moore

If you knew, I mean *really* knew, the Notre Dame-USC series, you could see it coming. The bowl, the streak, Lou's last hurrah all were on the line, and the setting was that graveyard of Irish hopes, Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. If you carry the scars of '64, '70 and especially '74, Ara's last regular season game, when a 24-6 halftime lead was nightmarishly transformed into a 55-24 debacle, you could talk

but there were '89 and '93 and he deserves credit for at least one of them), and their statistical records fill pages.

But other aspects of the legend are more unique — and more telling. The popularity he restored to Irish football lured NBC to Notre Dame, and, contrary to envious comment, the preponderance of NBC money goes not to the athletic department but to the university's financial aid endowment. This year alone, that endowment has generated \$700,000 that is being distributed to more than 70 Notre Dame students. What's more, Lou's team's nine bowl appearances generated almost \$29 million for student financial aid.

His personal generosity also enriched financial aid. Refusing publicity, he made regular gifts to a substantial scholarship fund that now carries his name. Among the most sought-after public speakers in the country, he turned down hundreds of thousands of dollars in appearance fees to put his speaking talents to work for the university as well as for scores of charitable causes. He literally created the Center for the Homeless Holiday Luncheon by agreeing to be its headliner each December. How many caps and shirts and letters of encouragement and congratulations and sympathy bear his signature no one knows — but each of them is a treasured memento to its owner.

The small and faithful group that gathers each weekday morning for the 6:30 Mass in the Crypt must miss his daily presence, although there was never a hint of celebrity in the greetings he exchanged at the kiss of peace. His faith was genuine and deep; it drew him to Notre Dame and rooted him here, in the embracing shadow of his Lady on the Dome.

He thought she cared if his team won football games. She didn't. But she surely cared for him ... as did we ... as will we ... as will she. □

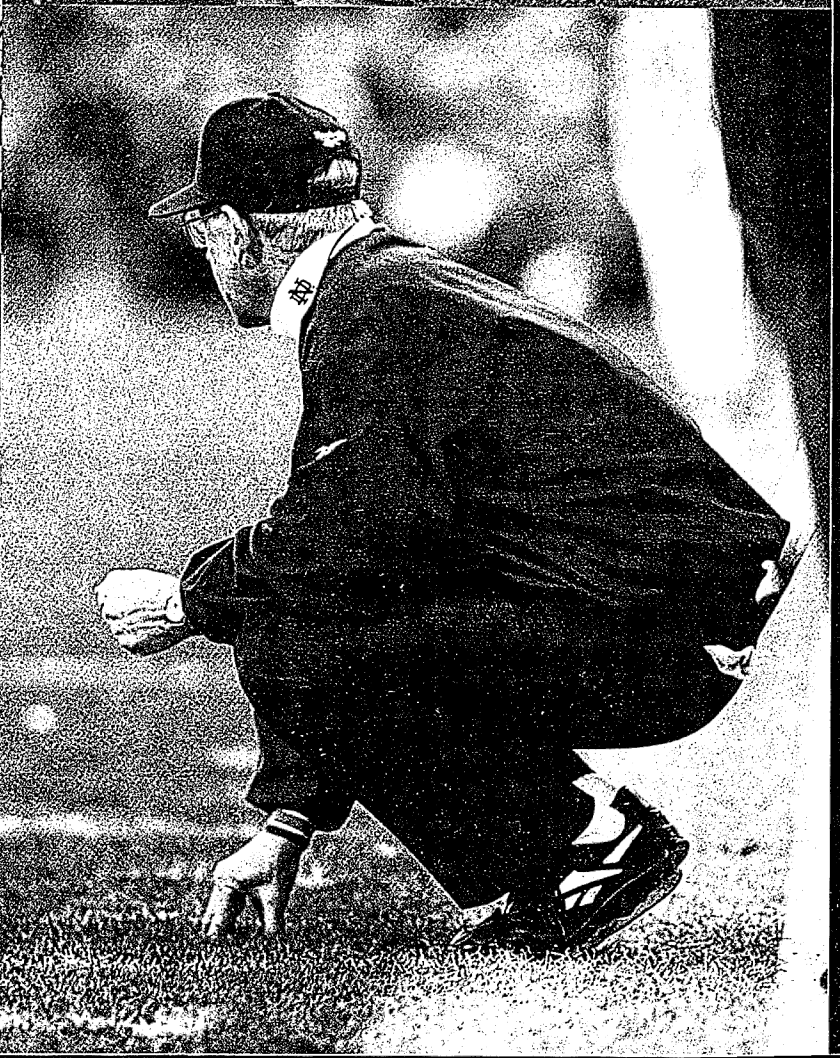
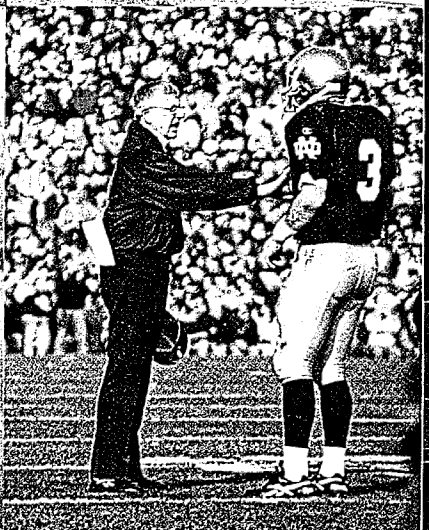
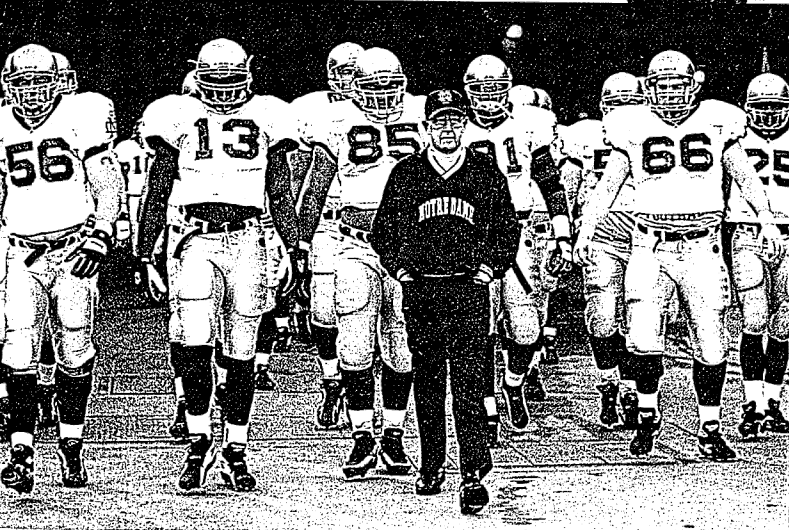
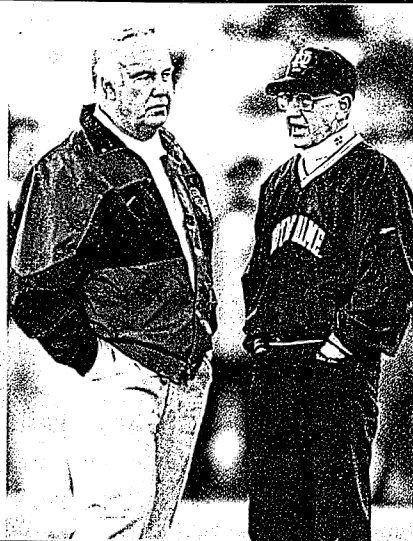
Forget the last game. Lou Holtz should have ridden out of the Notre Dame coaching job, and into Notre Dame history, on the shoulders of his players in a Southwestern twilight. That he did not is unfair, but so was Gipp's strep infection.

Dennis Moore is the director of the Public Relations Department. A 1970 graduate of Notre Dame, he carries the scars of the 1970 season and witnessed the ups and downs of Lou Holtz's storied career.

bravely, even make travel plans for Phoenix. But secretly you knew that history — fate — was about to trample Lou and us under the hooves of a Trojan horse.

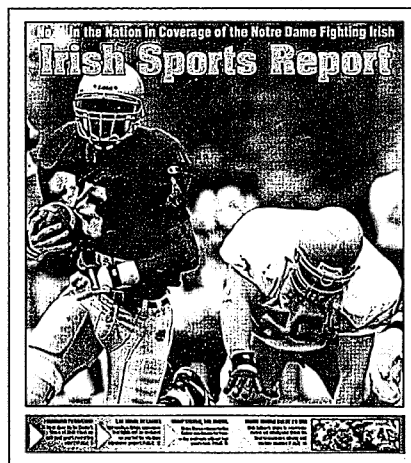
So forget the last game. Lou Holtz should have ridden out of the Notre Dame coaching job, and into Notre Dame history, on the shoulders of his players in a Southwestern twilight with a Tostitos trophy and another win over JoPa under his arm. That he did not is unfair, but so was Gipp's strep infection and the lightning or ice or whatever forces of nature and physics drove Rockne's plane into the ground. Lou, at least, walked away from the crash.

He walks away a legend, and his legend will grow larger with the years. His teams won two national championships (yeah, I know what the record says,



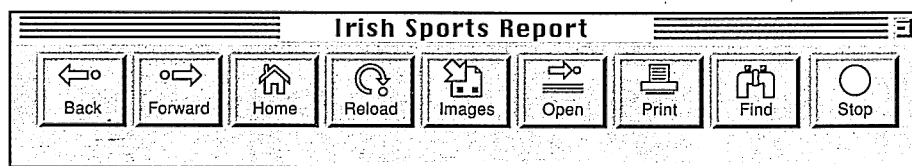
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